

PUNCH



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Life's simple pleasures

Most of us like to think that we have within us the makings of a connoisseur and we can rarely resist the temptation to wander round the kind of establishment which our philistine friends cheerfully (and libellously) call 'junk shops'. We do not expect to find in them unrecognised treasures. We know that the Samson figurine, which could be 18th century Chelsea or possibly Meissen, is almost certainly neither. We like the buhl cabinet though we deplore the repellent china creature next to it. Or, of course (it depends on your point of view) we admire the magnificent Staffordshire dog, though we can't think why they put it next to a ghastly tortoise-shell box. But all this is unimportant. What matters, what gives us our pleasure, is the sense of continuity with the past. This is something which we at the Midland Bank both understand and enjoy. We can trace our own lineage, through constituent banks, right back to 1762 – which makes us, in a way, contemporaries of Chippendale and Wedgwood and Gainsborough. This may surprise the many thousands of people who know the Midland only as a 20th century bank which is always up-to-the-minute – and very often ahead of it. But such is the case. And we can guarantee its authenticity.



PUNCH

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B

The London Charivari

WITH the apparent failure of his Pink Zone Mr. Marples might turn his thoughts from simple prohibition to complex permission. He already has a start with our system of PARKING ON EVEN DATES ONLY, and could take a hint from the French weekend speed limits. What we need is a rash of signs starting:

SPEED LIMIT 30 M.P.H.
on Thursdays
NO RIGHT TURN
after dark
PARK OTHER SIDE
on even dates

and tailing off into small type about the permitted axle load at Lammastide. This would enable the authorities to extend the Highway Code to a couple of volumes and fail *everybody* on their driving test, which in turn would remove any danger of candidates trying to bribe their way through.

Hi!

A NEW YORK savings bank is giving away free travelling bags to new customers depositing 25 dollars

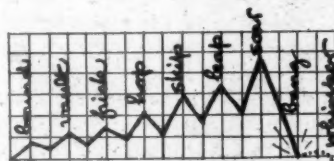


or more. The scheme hasn't been on the go long enough for anyone to say what happens if the customer then

elects to draw out his deposit in small change and take it away in the bag.

Sky's the Limit

UPWARD trends on the stock market, now dominating the City pages, disclose the sadly impoverished vocabulary of financial journalists. Industrials "rise vigorously," the Equity



index "jumps to new peak"; home bank shares "jump," blue-chips "rise"; shipping "rises," insurance "jumps." Where is the book of synonyms? After all, it is Leap Year.

The War of the Machines

DR. NORBERT WIENER, "mathematician and novelist," has been trying to make our flesh creep with a picture of automation getting out of hand; an old game by now. He suggests that "a completely automatic bottle factory might produce so many bottles as to bankrupt its owner before he could intervene." This doesn't worry me; I keep thinking of a dolls' voice factory running amok and a whole countryside strident with disembodied cries of "Mama." Not to mention a vision of humanity being edged into the deep by a surge of plastic tea trays or uncounted billions of budgerigar bells, all ringing.



"Don't worry, live for the present. We've got nearly all of January, all of February, March and April, and most of May before they meet. And there's an extra day in February, remember."

Come Right In

I HAVE always enjoyed the silly celebration of the round figure in commerce and industry—the ten thousandth coach passenger who finds to his surprise (or more often hers, oddly enough) that a reception committee is waiting at the terminal with bouquets, diplomas and cameramen from the staff magazine. But the practice seems to have taken a wry twist with the news that a London prison last week had a celebrity concert more or less in honour of its 500,000th prisoner. Neither the prison nor the prisoner was named, which is perhaps understandable, though disappointing for Governor and warders, whose pride of product deserved a wider circulation: but at least we might have been given a report of the ceremonial speeches, with a hint of how they managed to avoid that cliché of these occasions about "looking confidently ahead to our millionth . . ."

Air on the G String

LONDONERS who are tired of L Moiseiwitsch and that lot tearing off the usual dollops of Brahms and that sort of thing are now in for a cultural treat. Among last week's arrivals in London was Mlle. Cha Ladres, who brings a fresh approach to these matters.

She plays Chopin on a grand piano in the nude. Even Liberace never thought of that.

Look Round in Gratitude

AMONG the characters who have never had it so good I rate John Osborne very high. He jumped into the headlines with the success of *Look Back in Anger*, maintained his position there with the success of *The Entertainer*, and improved it with the failure of *The World of Paul Slickey*. Now he is back on the front page with the rejection of his television play. Those of us who have had innumerable television plays rejected without so much as a couple of lines in the *TV Times* can hardly help feeling a bit envious.

Solent Worship

PAUSING only to nip down to my lakeside retreat for a Norwegian sweater, I popped into the Earl's Court Boat Show the other night to see what they had in the way of a cheap pair of matching capstans. What I like about the show is that you can browse among the gas turbines, the diesel engines and the "personal breathing equipment" without being pressed to buy. At least you could until this year. But if the world has his wife with him this time, he'll have a job getting her away from the ever-so-nautical fashion parade.



"Calls from stockbrokers do not qualify as 'urgent domestic.'"

There were skin-tight Terylene trousers that "will get a girl out of all sorts of trouble." Out of trouble? "Even if she doesn't sail well," the commentator explained, "people will forgive her if she looks like this." I began to feel—with Mr. Heathcoat Amory, who opened the show—that it is sometimes most refreshing "to be knocked smartly on the head by a gybing boom."

These Off Sides

REPORTS of the fake Dynamos team which toured further-flung parts of the U.S.S.R. and were only exposed after losing all matches brought a gleam of light to many British followers of international soccer. Could it be that the England team, also consistent losers, are a bunch of impostors too?

Votes for Little Women

ONE bridegroom in ten and one bride in three is a teenager, so, urges one newspaper, how can we make them wait for votes at twenty-one? "Fit for doting, fit for voting," may make a slogan, but the argument ignores history—the age of marriage has tended to grow later with the centuries. So far as I know there was no great demand for votes for child brides in Shakespeare's day.

Funny Ha-Ha

A HOSPITAL, commenting on its treatment of a patient who had swallowed a mouse, said "Slowly he began to see the funny side of it." What on earth can the stages have been in his leisurely discovery that the situation had its laughable side?—twitch of the lips, half-giggle, rolling on the floor? Does the slur "slowly" mean that the nurses and casualty officers were far quicker off the mark than he was? Did the Sister force him to laugh as a matter of ward discipline? Question after question suggests itself. One almost forgets the mouse.

Nothing About Guns

RUSSIA, announces Mr. Khrushchev, is rapidly overhauling the Americans' meat output and has already whacked their butter production with a figure of 845,000 tons a year. And, apart from statements like this, guess whose mouth it wouldn't melt in, just at the moment?



AFRICAN TEST

Playwright: Angela Milne



PUNCH'S BRITISH MUSICALS

ON THE A30 TRAIL

ACT I

The curtain rises on the exterior of the Drovers' Arms, famed as the third smallest jug and bottle house between Andover and Exeter. It has benches outside, and a bus-stop sign and litter-basket. On the right is an oak-beamed cottage stuck with ceramic doves. It belongs to a choreographer who does black magic and is rumoured to be in the Bahamas. On the left, above a pebble-dash bungalow, rolls grassland covered with as many barrows, tumuli, megaliths, druidical yew plantings and Nissen huts as can be got in.

When the applause for the litter-basket has died down, six pips are heard from the pub and JOE the landlord unbolts the doors just as a lifelike Cream and Emerald Cumfyline Coach draws up and disgorges a crowd.

TOURISTS

We're heading for the trail they call A30,
And a long slow trail it is,
But any trail is fine when you're in a Cumfyline
With its little extra luxuries!

Roll on, super-sprung non-bump coach-wheels,
With all the heavy luggage in the boot at the back
And the new-type ashtrays and individual bucket seats
And full head clearance for the parcels rack—

DRIVER

May I please remind you that the next break's Yeovil,
Which some think a bit of a hop,
And there isn't time to sing or to gambol in a ring
At a ten-minute Scheduled Stop?

(They disperse hastily, revealing FRED THUMP, an earthy man in a white cotton sunhat, seating himself next to a port-drinking woman in beach dress and angora stole.)

JOE: Get caught in many carnivals, ma'am? They be terrible about these roads this time of year. Rushed off our feet, Fred, but here's your usual. Your cows were late this afternoon.

FRED *(drinking deeply)*: Ah. Daisy found an ice-cream paper and I couldn't get her past.

WOMAN: Fancy, you mind cows! What fun!

CROWD: What fun!

FRED *(advancing as music plays)*: Cattle ain't all fun, ladies and gentlemen. It's a lone, hard life, mine is.

In early morn I fetch my cows
When field be plushed with dew.
Beside the gate I stand and wait
Till all have sauntered through.
Then I follow them up the road so clear
With a fal-lal-lal-lal-lo
And a hup-hup there and a hup-hup here
To keep them on the go, O!
To keep them on the go.

When milking's done I follow my cows
A-down the road again.
Then all too soon the afternoon
Means further journeys twain.
Yes, on that selfsame road I'm found
With a hup-there-hup-there-ho
And half o' the beasts the wrong way round
And the motorists in a row, O!
The motorists in a row.

(JANEY, a real country girl with naturally pink hair and spike heels, teeters in agitatedly and throws her arms round FRED.)

JANEY: Oh, Fred, Mrs. Brown's Vera was counting your cows for her Number homework and what do you think? You've only got six!

FRED *(working it out)*: Then one's missing.

JANEY: And Fred, there's a hole cut in the hedge into his allotment. *(She nods towards a swarthy man, in overalls and black beret, who has buttonholed JOE.)*

JOE: No, Jack, I don't want a telly, however cheap your friend's friend's is. I know I got the aerial. That was the last lot, the bloke who went into selling plastic silage pits.

JACK: Tell you what then, I'll take it down for three quid. I'm branching into two-storey roof work now I've got a better ladder.

FRED *(eyeing JACK squarely)*: You wouldn't be branching into dairy work too?

(There is an ugly hush. JACK laughs insolently as he swigs his cider and clutches the Bad Girl, a stunted brunette in Bermuda shorts. The BRIGADIER ambles on from the saloon bar, wiping his grey moustache and parking his roll of wire-netting by the bus-stop.)

BRIGADIER

There's a little old shack by the river so wide,
That's where I'm longing to be.
The chappie who built it kept chickens, or tried.
Home, now it's home to me.

Home, home, that little old shack.

If ever you pass in your car
It's the one where the roofing is off round the edge,
The one with the notice-board over the hedge,
HONEY IN COMB OR JAR.

(He slaps his pocket, unrolls a Bring-and-Buy Sale poster.)

Joe, stick that in the bar, there's a good fellow. Ankle contest, tombola, the lot, jolly good. (JANEY whispers.) Oh, I say, Janey, jolly bad. (He rises.) Jack Bounce, am I or am I not a former special constable and the nearest thing you'll see to a policeman in these parts?

JACK: Yessir.

BRIGADIER: Then, as representative of law and order, I demand that you give back the animal you have, if you'll excuse the word, stolen.

JACK (baring his fine teeth): Bah! (All gasp. He throws off the Bad Girl. Defensively the BRIGADIER swings his string bag of groceries, but steps back as the crowd surges aboard.)

TOURISTS

Roll on, coach wheels, hit that trail!
We'll keep on moving, just!
Yeovil, Crewkerne, Bodmin, Hayle,
We'll reach Penzance or bust!

(Meanwhile the Cumfyline waits patiently behind six forest ponies and a pig.)

CURTAIN

ACT II

The Plain at sunset, quiet but for distant gunfire. FRED and JANEY wheel their bikes off the road. JANEY's has tartan mudguards and she looks more outdoor than ever in her tight white gaberdine skirt. They lean their machines against two National Servicemen drowsing over an electric camp fire beside a guitar and a tea-chest, and embrace.

FRED

I'll never forget you
The time that I met you,
You wore something full and a flower in your hair.

JANEY

And you'd just come out of
Your seventeenth bout of
A-watching the striptease at Salisbury Fair.

(The National Servicemen wake up and strum dreamily.)

JANEY (sighing): Oh, Fred, shall we ever get Daisy back from that wicked Jack?

FRED: Don't see how. He keeps her indoors, the cunning devil.

JANEY: I hear he's in the money now, he's bought that girl a suede coat of real suede, imagine! (She looks wistful, then smiles.) But what does it matter to you and I as long as we have each other and our memories? Remember, after we'd met?

Our ro-mance went gaily,
We met almost daily,
We went to Southampton and looked at the ships.

FRED

That dance there, a rare do,
They crowned you Miss Hairdo
Because of the way that you wiggle your hips.

(This number eventually gives way to a complicated ballet danced by archaeological vandals, journalists looking for a military exercise, and two bacon-curers' apprentices. Then a drop-curtain changes the scene to the Brigadier's front garden. The roof is right off his shack now, but in his bee-keeper's veil he leans on his gate and sings bravely.)

BRIGADIER

For us who love the sky above
And live like the birds and flowers,
There's never a Region like our Region,
The West Region, that's ours!
Where the rain blows brisk from the Scillies' shore,
Then off to the East while we take in more—

(He breaks off as the BAD GIRL, wearing apparently nothing under the suede coat, approaches with her friend, a frizzy blonde.)

BRIGADIER: Excuse me, madam. I think you know Jack Bounce.

BAD GIRL: 'Lo, curtainface. (Her friend giggles.)

BRIGADIER: Do you think you could ask him to see to my roof, as he has promised these two years?

BAD GIRL: Ow no, he won't do you, not after what you done to him. (Her friend giggles.)

BRIGADIER (drawing himself up and thundering): Are you aware that as the representative of law, order and decency in this district I could have you removed from the Drovers' Arms and so rid our little community . . .



"I miss the coffee tables and the old French windows."

BAD GIRL: Run me out of town, huh? Well, you won't have to. Me and my friend was only stopping a week. Now we're going on to Bournemouth for our other week 'cos Marty's there. *(She leers ravishly.)* Can I buy some greengages like it says on your notice?

BRIGADIER *(opening gate with delight)*: Come in, come in, dear ladies.

(The scene melts into a ducal park with stalls dotted under the trees and villagers in flowered chiffon, sun-tops, feather hats, shorts, etc., drifting round buying fudge and chipped candlesticks. JANEY trips on, looking radiant in pink and carrying a wine-cooler won in the tombola.)

JANEY

I knew when I woke up this morning,
And the roses were covered with dew,
And I looked at the sky, I don't know why
But I knew, I knew, I knew—

I knew my heart would be singing
At the Bring-and-Buy Sale,
With the folk all buying and bringing
At the Bring-and-Buy Sale!

(FRED joins her with his own prize, twenty-four packets of washing soda.)

FRED, JANEY AND CHORUS

Come all you people and hurry along,
Come buy, come bring, come buy!
If you don't want a vase and you do want a gong,
Come buy, come bring, come buy!
Bring plum jam! Buy the works of Lamb
Or a couple of rolling-pins!
Our sale down here is the top of the year
Out where the West begins!

(The BRIGADIER, clutching a bust of Dr. Johnson, rushes on pursued by JACK.)

JACK *(cornering him)*: You listen to me, Brig! You and your sneaky tales to the health boys about a cow in me front room! Now it's me got the better of you! *(He drops his*



"If only someone would make an attempt on your life we'd have a good excuse for leaving."

rusty coke boiler and pulls out a paper.) Surprise for the tax man—your sales for the last ten years of cut gladioli and cordwood!

(The BRIGADIER recoils. FRED and JANEY rush after JACK shouting "Stop him!" as the scene blacks out.)

Once more it is the Plain. FRED and JANEY pedal on, fling themselves panting from their bikes and point at the horizon.

FRED: There he goes, running, running. He must have caught the 216 bus to get such a start. Look now, slap through the barbed wire! *(There is a terrific explosion.)* Well, if he didn't blow up he got arrested. Ah, that's taken care of him.

JANEY: Oh, Fred. *(She wipes her eyes.)* He was mending my hair-drier. Now I'll never get it.

FRED: Janey, I've been thinking about us—you and me. *(A guitar offstage strums "I'll Never Forget You," and JANEY puts her head on FRED's shoulder.)*

JANEY: I've been thinking too, Fred. You ought to go back to your wife, really, Fred, she was asking about you in the shop only this morning.

FRED: That's right. I've been thinking so too.

JANEY *(excitedly)*: And I can marry that Ernest. Fancy, I'd forgotten him!

(She beams and, the curtain rising, drags FRED back into the Sale, which is now a scene of debauchery. A. G. Street and Jeremy Thorpe are judging the ankle contest, the ponies and the pig are standing about, the National Servicemen have set up in one corner and in the other the Cumfyline coach, dusty now, is disgorging its tourists once more.)

TOURISTS *(triumphantly)*

We got all the way to Chard, and it didn't rain too hard—
(Mooring loudly, Daisy, a monumental Friesian, is pushed on.)

FRED *(hugging her)*

My troubles now be at an end
With Daisy back again.
Yes, I have found a faithful friend,
Though I have lost my Jane.
But that be life, as cowmen know;
With a hup-there-hup-there-hi,
We must drive our cattle to and fro
And bid our girls goodbye, aye!
And bid our girls goodbye.

(He puts his other arm round JANEY)

But still I will find you,
The cornflakes behind you,
A-doling out stamps in the General Store.

JANEY

So don't let us cry dear
We won't say good-bye, dear,
We'll carry on, likely, the same as before.

CROWD *(dancing round the happy trio)*

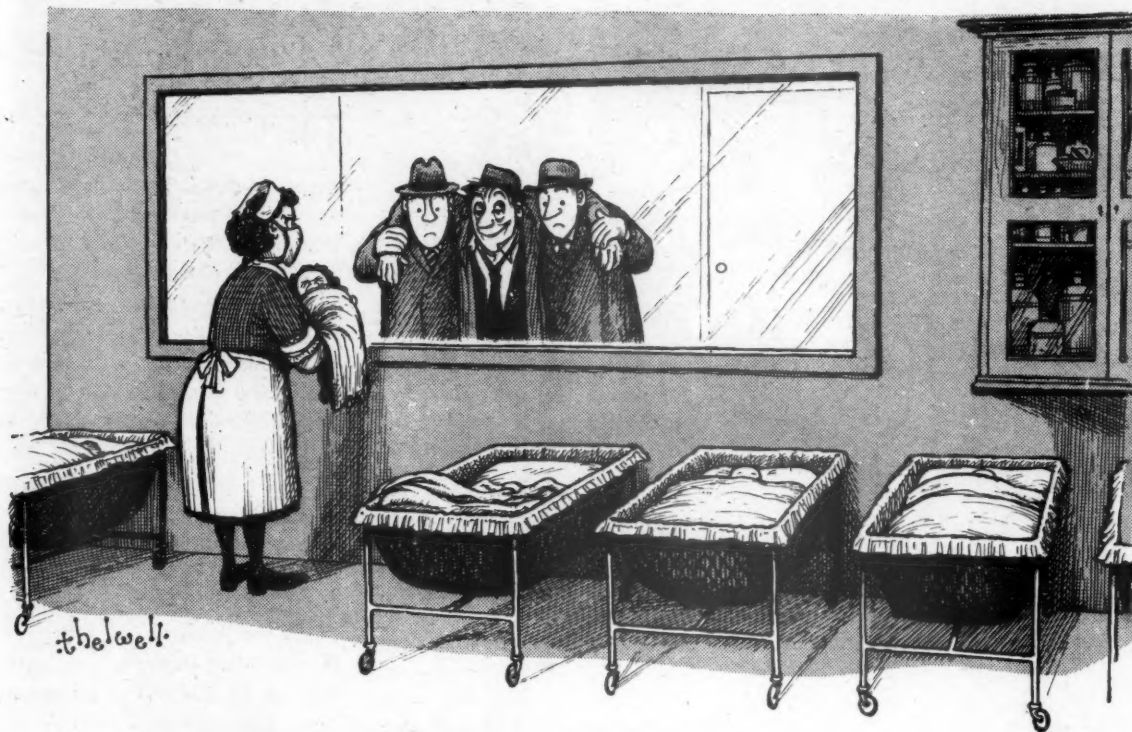
So come all you folk to the land of the plain
And the little old shanty town,
Where the cows plod forth in sun and rain
And the A30 trail runs down;

Pack your bags and hurry along
Out where the scenery thins,
Where the ponies champ and the beer be Strong,
Out where the West begins!

BRIGADIER: How about ending with a real West of England folk-song?

(There is an awkward silence until someone strikes up "Ilkley Moor," in which all join heartily.)

CURTAIN



Be Difficult this Year

By J. B. BOOTHROYD

ONE thing we must all do in 1960 is question merchants. This tip comes to you through the courtesy of the Consumer Advisory Council, who were analysing some grass seed samples the other week. They reported that a lawnmower and six had been driven clean through the Seeds Act of 1920 (you remember the Seeds Act of 1920), and after awarding about fourteen faults they ended by blaming the consumer: "He should question the merchant on all these points."

So try this. If not for the Council's sake, for mine. I'd like to hear how you make out. Because I've been questioning merchants for years, mainly haberdashers, and all it's got me is a wardrobe full of socks that won't stay up, braces I can't bend down in, and ties that go all sideways.

Or take shirts. I give shirt merchants hell.

"Will it feel as if I'm in a tube?"

The man says it won't. So far, so good. I explain to him that tight shirts

constrict the circulation, expose the undervest line in bas-relief, and pepper my friends with buttons if I turn sharply. I add that I suppose these particular buttons to be firmly affixed to the garment.

"Very firm indeed, these buttons, sir." He eases the thing a couple of inches out of its transparent envelope and gives a button a dainty wrench. Nothing to carp at there.

"It's a pale blue shirt?" This is because of a mild colour-blindness, just enough to make me a shaky partner at snooker. I explain this, and he at once assures me that the shirt is blue.

"Chain-marks on the forearm?" He is caught off balance with this one, not knowing whether I want chain marks or don't want chain-marks.

"Sir?" he says, playing for time.

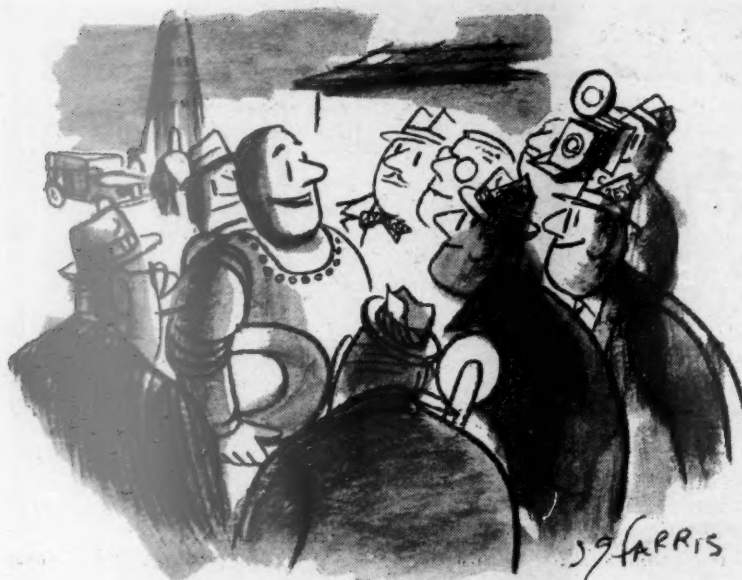
"What I find with shirts is that if the collar fits my neck the sleeves rarely reach much below the elbow, which means that the little chains on my cuff-links impress a decorative but painful

cicatrice on the flesh of the lower arm." He says that the sleeves of this shirt are amply long. I shall enjoy the length of sleeve on this shirt. This seems satisfactory.

"As to the angle of cuff. I have had shirts before now where the cuffs appear to have been stitched on upside down. This may seem a small point to you." (He assures me that it doesn't.) "But a man otherwise well-turned-out, who stretches his arms on the dinner-table and sees his cuff-links sticking out at the top, is bound to feel a passing unease."

On that score, he says, I need have no fears. On this shirt the cuff-links hang down at the bottom. He asks me, with his eye on another customer of the "Is it size eight I'll take it" type, if I have any further queries.

"Yes. If these sleeves are amply long, won't that mean that the collar will hang down in the V of my waistcoat, exposing the Adam's apple and points south?"



"The moon's a nice place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there."

"No, sir."

"Thank you. What about tuck-in? Is this a shirt that will work its tails out of my trousers?"

This he denies with animation. Liberal tuck-in is one of his personal fads. It is for this reason, among others, that he favours this brand of shirt for his own wear.

"No skimpy cutting at all?"

"No skimping whatsoever." To prove it he turns the shirt over, square and strong in its gleaming bag, rigid with cardboard reinforcement, stiff with stiffeners, heavy with pins, and bangs it twice on the counter.

There is a pause, during which a fellow-merchant lets down the window-blind with a marked rattle and disappears into a fitting room with a rustle of sandwich paper.

"You'll take it?" says the man, with an imperceptible move to tear brown paper from a giant toilet-roll. "You've got a bargain here."

"At fifty-five and sixpence? Wouldn't you say that was a trifle expensive?"

"On the low side, sir, if anything."

"I shall be completely satisfied?"

"Absolutely."

"Good. One last point. This shirt, in your view, is it a hard-wearing shirt?"

He wraps it up. It will last a lifetime, he says.

And well it may. When I get it home it proves to be short and tight, with a collar to fit a horse. When I shake it out of its folds it showers the bedroom with hardboard, perspex, pins and buttons. Moreover, a member of the family drawn by my cries asks me what I am doing with a pink shirt, and demands to know why I do not question merchants. I hang it at the back of my wardrobe. Sometimes, on fine, optimistic mornings, I shall try it on to see if it has grown longer and looser, or if its collar-slack has secretly taken itself up in the mothballed dark. I shall be disappointed. It will continue to hang there, and not alone, making a laughing-stock of me, the Consumer Advisory Council, and the Shirts Act of 1955.

☆

"BOY RODE NUDE THROUGH PARK"

A fifth former has been suspended from Poole Grammar School, Dorset, after admitting that he rode naked on a motor-cycle in a local park a week ago...

His father said: "We are not trying to whitewash our boy but..."

Daily Telegraph

Might be better than nothing.

56

A Courteous Reply

DEAR MADAM,

I have read with pleasure
For weeks now in my hours of leisure
The sheaf of poems which you sent
With such a charming compliment:
"I did so terribly admire
Your book *The Mountain and the Pyre*—
It showed rare knowledge of the Muse—
And therefore should esteem your views
On the few verses I enclose,
Hoping that when you've studied those
You'll criticize my blank-verse drama
On Incest, God, not-God and Karma."
Words fail me to extol at length
The ardour, turbulence and strength
Of "Sappho: an Extravaganza,"
Especially the two-hundredth stanza
Where you compare your flaming heart
With bleeding Orpheus, torn apart
And cast by Maenads on the stream.
Your archetypal-image dream
Reminded me of Dylan Thomas—
Five pages without stops or commas,
Conjunctions, relatives or verbs
And other such prosaic curbs.
I find it hard to choose between
Your Symbolist poem "Blue on Green,"
The intricate "Symphonic Canto"
In Dutch, Thai, Basque and Esperanto,
And that Empsonian villanelle
Called "Ambiguities in Hell."
You ask if I would recommend
A publisher where you can send
Your sonnet-sequence about rape.
Faber? I think not. Chatto? Cape?
Give it to Soames, the specialists
In Javanese eroticists,
Who brought out "Odes to
Flagellation,"

Petronius (in a free translation),
"Inscriptions on Pompeian Urns"
And "Verse Attributed to Burns."
As for the play, I think it better
To try the Royal Court Theatre.
Wishing you all deserved success,
I am,

Yours faithfully,

— JOHN PRESS

On the Old Brass Tack

By BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

IT seems to me that there are many more millionaires around now, in 1960, than there used to be a few months ago, before (say) the General Election. Why this should be I do not know, unless it is that men are now less reluctant to admit their affluence. Either that or they've forgotten to mark their pools coupons with the cross of anonymity. A year or so ago, before it was certain that Macmillan would be at Albion's helm for a decade or two, rich men were pretty cagey when questioned about their financial status: "You are a wealthy man, Mr. Fingle?"

"I suppose you could call me that. Well—yes."

"A millionaire?"

"I don't think so. No, I wouldn't say so. No, almost certainly not."

"Don't you know?"

"Not, really, I never count it. I work so hard that I just haven't the time. Honestly."

"But wouldn't your accountant tell you?"

"He doesn't know, either. You see, my business interests are so fluid that it's impossible to say what I'm worth at any moment. You *know* how it is."

"Alas, no. Would you *like* to be a millionaire, Mr. Fingle?"

"Millionaire, shmillionaire! Who cares? I tell you I like to work. Money isn't everything."

But not to-day. Almost every popular newspaper is now carrying biographical pieces about the great moguls of finance, and the moguls are obviously only too happy to supply the columnists with colourful details.

"You are a wealthy man, Mr. Baumer?"

"I reckon so. Not as wealthy as Ja—as some, but wealthy. Let's say I'm stacked."

"A millionaire?"

"I guess so. Three or four times over. More maybe."

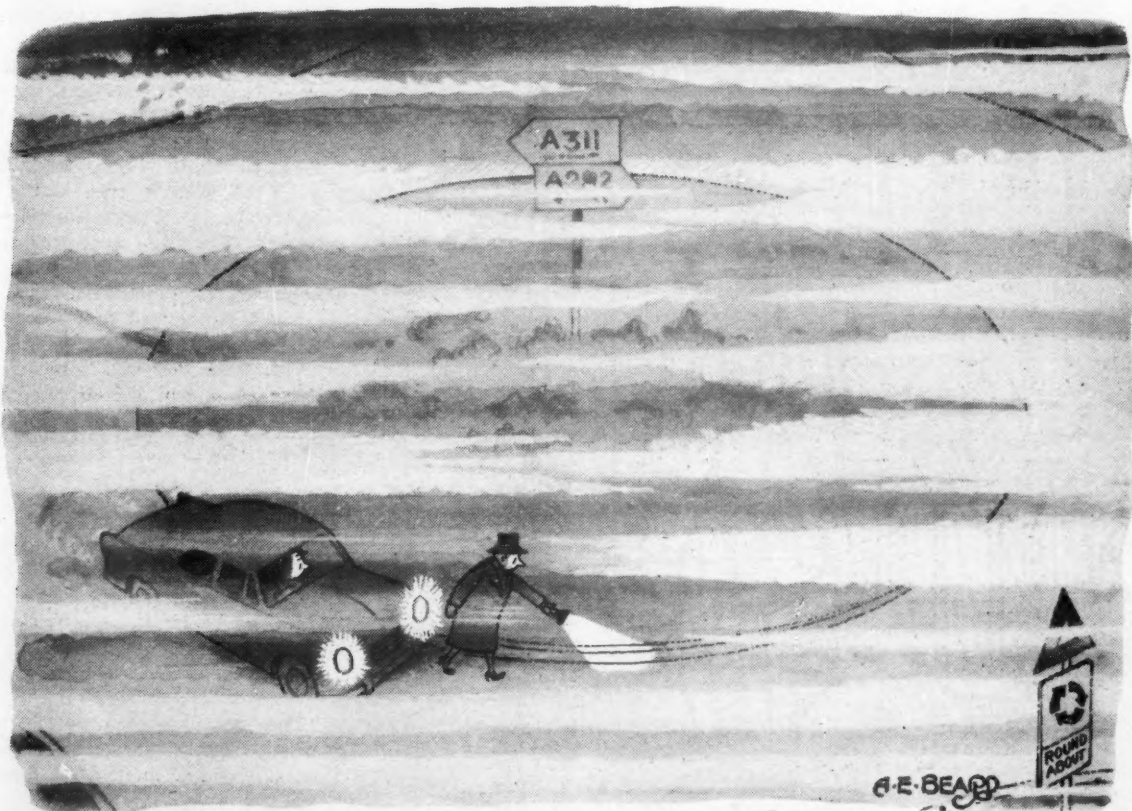
"I'm told that you made all of it yourself."

"That's right—since the war. You remember when Attlee's mob took over and a raft of people got the wind up and scarpered for foreign climes? Well, I stayed put because I figured that with so many chums going yellow the competition would be less severe and the pickings more fruitful."

"And you were proved right?"

"I flatter myself."

"But it used to be said that nobody could make a fortune in Britain any more, that taxes were too high. Even now I believe that there are only two



hundred people with incomes as high as £6,000 a year after tax. How did you manage it?"

"Not out of income, boy. I started in '46, buying ex-U.S. Army underpants and flogging them to Eastern Germany and, oddly enough, Senegal. When I'd made my first twenty thou. it was a doddle. I put it in plastics, then oil, then soft drinks and finally property. Unfortunately I missed out on commercial TV. Now that was a *real* beanfeast if you like. I don't like to talk about it though: it puts me off my caviar."

"Ah! So you are that remarkable phenomenon, the millionaire who lives it up, swigs champers and canes the caviar?"

"Not at all. I was using the stuff as a figure of speech. Actually I live very frugally, eat nothing but breakfast cereals, sausage and mash, and seed cake."

"Really! Then all these tales about your yachts, silver-plated limousines and so on are mere idle gossip."

"Not exactly. I indulge in them for business reasons only. In order to impress my clients I resort to conspicuous spending—a form of advertising."

"And get no fun out of it at all?"

"None. I live in a bed-sitter in Knightsbridge, ride a bike, cook my own meals, don't smoke, drink or debauch, and go to bed at nine-thirty every night."

"Then why bother to *make* so much money? For your family?"

"I'm a bachelor. No, I guess I like providing work for people. I'm a sort of public benefactor, if you'll pardon the self-inflicted pat on the back."

"Work being in your view a good thing?"

"Natch! I thrive on it. My old mum used to scold me every day. She said, 'Harold,' she said 'you do nothing but make work.' So I reckoned after a time that that was the thing I was best at—making work. So that's what I did when I grew to man's estate. Except that I now call it *providing* work."

"You seem to have everything, Mr. Baumer. Is there anything more you want from life?"

"Well . . ."

"A knighthood, perhaps, a peerage?"

"Crikey, no! Get a handle to your name and you're suspect immediately in my line of country. I don't want to sit on no boards of directors or anything, so why the peerage?"

"It's said that you're a mean tipper. Last year you were reported as giving a penny to a British Railways restaurant car waiter. Right?"

"Correct. But why the fuss? I tip at the market rate, no more, no less. A coffee costs ninepence and ten per of ninepence is nine-tenths of a d. If anything I overtyped that fellow-mead. Tell me, why should I tip more than other people just because I'm rich?"

"Well, Mr. Baumer, I'm poor, yet I always tip threepence for a cup of coffee."

"More fool you! Thirty-three per is crazy. If I make ten on a deal I'm happy. Why should the other guy expect thirty-three for flogging me a cuppa, especially when it's like cabbage water?"

"One more question, sir. You were a millionaire several years ago, weren't you? Then why is it that you've waited so long to admit it?"

"Fashion, partly, I suppose. When Attlee's mob were in it was asking for trouble to count the smackers. They'd have nationalized you as soon as look, or clapped on a capital gains tax. So discretion, etc. Then when the Conservatives, Winnie and Eden and Mac, got back we had to take it quiet for a time for the sake of appearances. Decent interval and all that. There was a sort of unwritten agreement among the boys that nobody would break through the seven-figure barrier. Until Solly opened up."

"Solly?"

"Yes, old Billington of United Properties and Legal Holdings Limited. He ratted on us, said he was worth his million—which he certainly was—and as a result pulled off the Fenchurch Demolition contract. Money talks, you see."

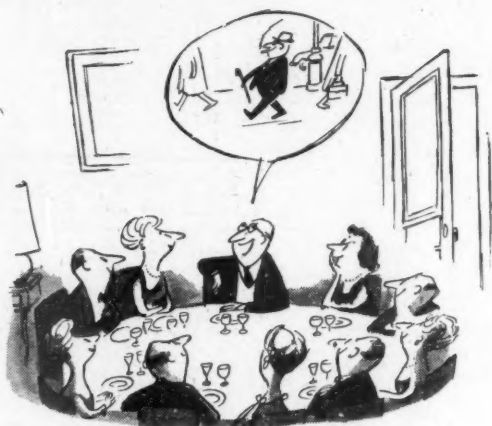
"Then you all followed suit?"

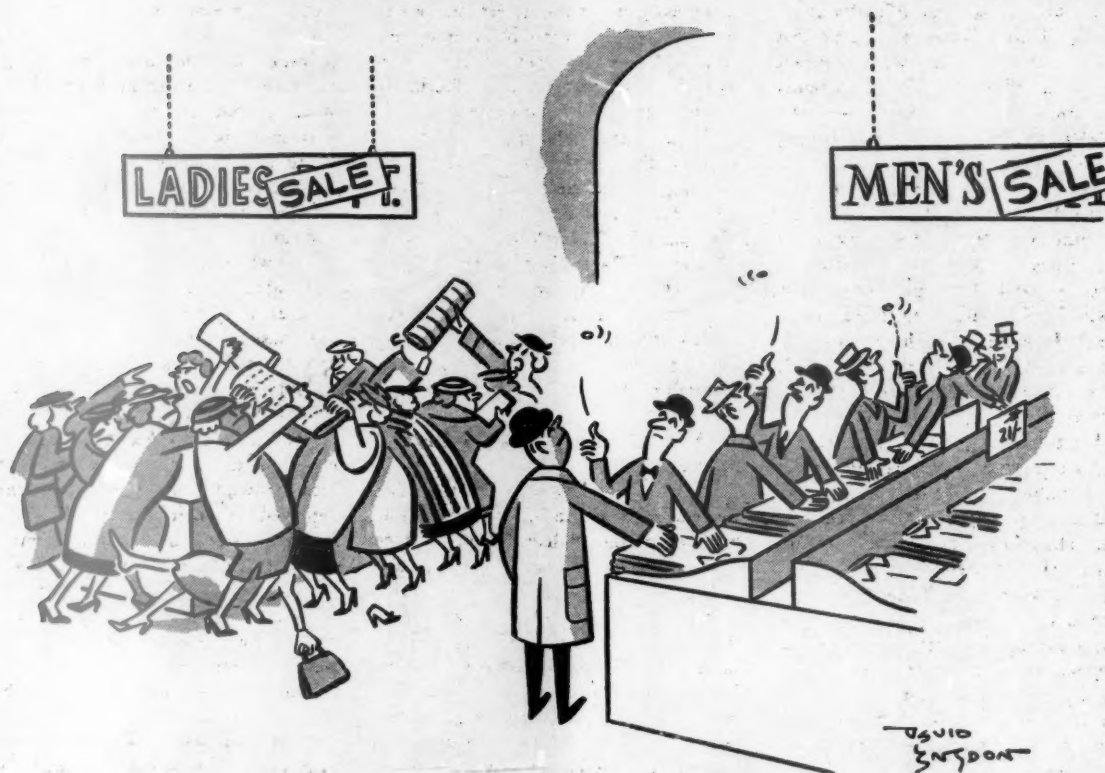
"Had to—in self-defence. No good putting in a bid these days, thanks, unless you're fully charged."

"No, thank you, Mr. Baumer."



"You'll have to come, dear—she's switched on the charm."





Red Man's Gulch

By H. F. ELLIS

ONLY a limited number of readers will be interested in the current rates of pay for film scripts in Poland. Still, minorities must be catered for, and I do not hesitate to pass on the information that a new system of payment has been in force in Warsaw since January 1. Film scripts with a high ideological content now receive the top rates; those with box office appeal but a less clear-cut socialist message get less; and there is a third, yet lower, rate for those with no message at all.

That concludes the information at present available to me about current rates of pay for film scripts in Poland. Its implications are neither more nor less gruesome than one would expect in a country that is the most "free" of all those behind the Iron Curtain. But I have, by courtesy of B.U.P., another

item of news about rates of pay in Poland closely allied to the foregoing. "Already" (I read), "writers of detective stories and 'Westerns' are receiving 500 zlotys (£7) per sixteen printed pages less than writers of other work—who receive 2,000 zlotys (£28) per sixteen printed pages." What is one to make of this?

Observe that there is nothing here to suggest that a thriller or a Western with a high ideological content rates more zlotys than one with none. Both classes or categories are derated, lock, stock and barrel, without further inquiry; and one is forced to conclude that in Poland the theory obtains that neither detective stories nor Westerns can be ideological. Biography, history, romance; poetry, criticism, *belles lettres*; treatises on pond-life, on the infinitesimal calculus, on Etruscan art; books

for boys, for the practical handyman, for lepidopterists—these are all "other work"; by all means let the author have his 2,000 zlotys. There is always the chance that he will have worked in something pretty derogatory about capitalism. But what is this unideological rubbish about a dismembered corpse on the banks of the Vistula? Where the advantage to the Party in this trash about deputy sheriffs? Cut 'em both down to fifteen hundred, and lucky to get that.

This, if I am right about the way the authorities in Warsaw are thinking, is sheer blind prejudice. A murder story, properly handled, can further the class war at least as effectively as any elementary Algebra or manual of seamanship. I could write one to-morrow, with some rich deviationist as the chief suspect, that would be worth anything

up to 3,000 zlotys per sixteen printed pages. Nor do I see any difficulty about a wisely slanted Western—except that I am not altogether sure what is meant by a Polish Western. Do Poles really write stories about bunkhouses and Jake's Eating Place and six-guns snaking smoothly out of tied-down holsters? And if so, what is the Polish for "Howdy?" and "Youall," and "I shore don't aim to bother you folks any"? Or is a Polish "Western" really an "Eastern," and all about goings-on in the wild Pripet Marshes in the eighteen-sixties? In either case the principle is the same. There's plenty of room for ideology when the chips are down and hands are hovering over the gun butts, whether the setting is west or east.

If I happen to take an example from Nevada rather than Pinsk, that is purely a matter of personal convenience.

The showdown, as I see it, comes when Black Jack Ferguson, boss of the Lazy Y and terror of Rattlesnake City, deliberately incites Curley Bennett to draw, knowing that the impoverished cowman's firing-pin has been rusted away by the sweat that has poured from him in years of ill-paid riding (25 zlotys extra) on the outskirts of the cattleowner's huge empire.

"Yore sister ain't no better than a —!" sneers the plutocratic cattleman, his brutal lips curling disdainfully round a forty-cent cigar.

Curley Bennett's lithe right-hand moves down and up again with a lightning swiftness that only a trained writer of Polish Westerns could hope to describe. His toil-worn finger tightens on the trigger. But it is all in vain. There is not even a click.

Ferguson meanwhile has not even bothered to draw. With lazy effrontery he borrows a stockwhip from one of the rich fellow-ranchers lounging beside him against the saloon bar and lays the cruel lash across the slight figure of the downcast hired man. "Git back to yore bunkhouse, proletarian scum!" snarls Black Jack (10 zlotys). "An' tell yore purty sister to come up to my ranch-house pronto, or it'll be the worse fer yore old Maw an' Paw (20 zlotys). Now git!"

Blind with despair and baffled rage the bleeding cowman stumbles through the swing-doors . . .

Well, of course, outside, huddled in their tattered chaps against the pitiless

icy winds from the north-east, or the merciless glare of the desert sun rather, sits a bunch of downtrodden hired men, long ago deprived even of their guns by order of the corrupt Sheriff of Rattlesnake City. Curley tells all. It is the last straw, the signal for revolt. Eagerly the hired men sacrifice the stoppings from their teeth to provide metal for a new firing-pin. Old Doc Milligan, who has left-wing sympathies (20 zlotys), allows his Bunsen burner to be used for the welding. And in less time than it takes to tell (or say about sixteen printed pages) Curley Bennett is back in the saloon to settle the thing, one way or the other, for keeps.

"You lie, Black Jack Ferguson!" he snaps.

There now follows one of the most suspense-ridden gun fights in the whole history of the Polish West. Once deadly with a six-shooter, Black Jack is no longer the man he was. Rich living has taken its toll. Grown fat on the labours of others (50 zlotys) he cannot at first reach his hip. He is encumbered by bags of gold and pockets stuffed with the forged title-deeds of poor men's smallholdings (200 zlotys). Even when his gun is at last in his hand he has to blow down

the barrel to clear it of cigar ash. And Curley, meanwhile, has his own troubles. Worn out with hunger, privation and the savage whipping he has received, he can no longer jerk his weapon from its holster in a single movement as he would have been able to do in a fully-socialized community (500 zlotys). Grey-faced, with infinite slowness he drags the heavy Colt up and up . . .

The whole trouble with most Western gun-fights is that they are over before you can properly describe them. This one, based as it is on the two slowest draws in the annals of Rattlesnake City, should last with careful handling a good 2,000 zlotys-worth of print. But in the end Curley gets his man. The long tyranny is over. The hired hands come crowding in. The rich ranchers, deprived of their leader, flee to the Border. And Curley, amid scenes of universal rejoicing, makes his closing speech:

"Wal, fellers, I reckon youall shore aim to he'p me set up a Collective Ranch hereabouts."

They all shore will. The only thing that troubles me is that, in the sequel, old Doc Milligan is almost certain to turn out to be a kind of small-town Kerensky.

Man in Apron

by Larry



before
treatment



Legalize Your Office Now

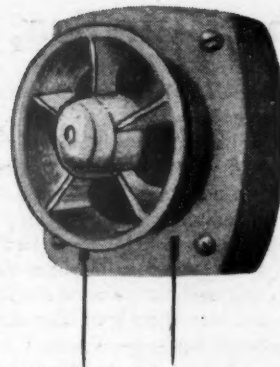
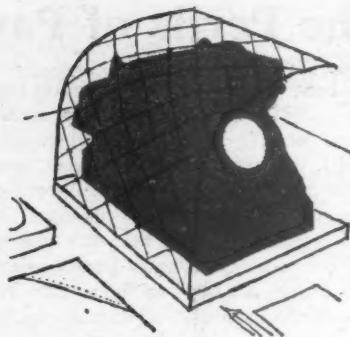
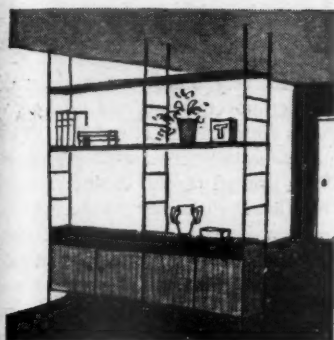
*How will your office look if Mr. Richard Marsh's
Offices Bill, which has already had its Second
Reading, becomes law? We read through
the speeches made during the Second Reading debate
and extracted all the points that seemed to
us to be of importance. Then we called in our
Interior Decorating Editor and set him to work on
a typical City office. This is the result.*

THE office which I chose for my treatment is at the back of a dark Victorian block in Eastcheap, on the ground floor. It belongs to Messrs. Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos, a firm of export and import merchants, and is occupied by Mr. Lachesis and Mr. Atropos, two girl secretaries and an office boy. The over-all dimensions of the office are fourteen feet by fifteen. Mr. Lachesis described it as "cosy."

I made the following observations on my first visit:

The lighting, one small window, was inadequate. The atmosphere was intolerably stuffy. There was no washbasin or other convenience. The gas-ring was inadequate for the provision of the amount of tea required, and in any case leaked at the joint with the pipe. The heating, provided by one small electric stove, was insufficient. The furniture was old-fashioned, inconvenient and dusty, and files and other papers were stored at random on every available horizontal surface. There were bugs in the walls, death-watch beetles in the floor, and moths in the carpet, but no fire-escape.

I began by removing the desk used by both the partners and the secretaries and replacing it by a new one of contemporary design. I also put in a "room-divider" in order

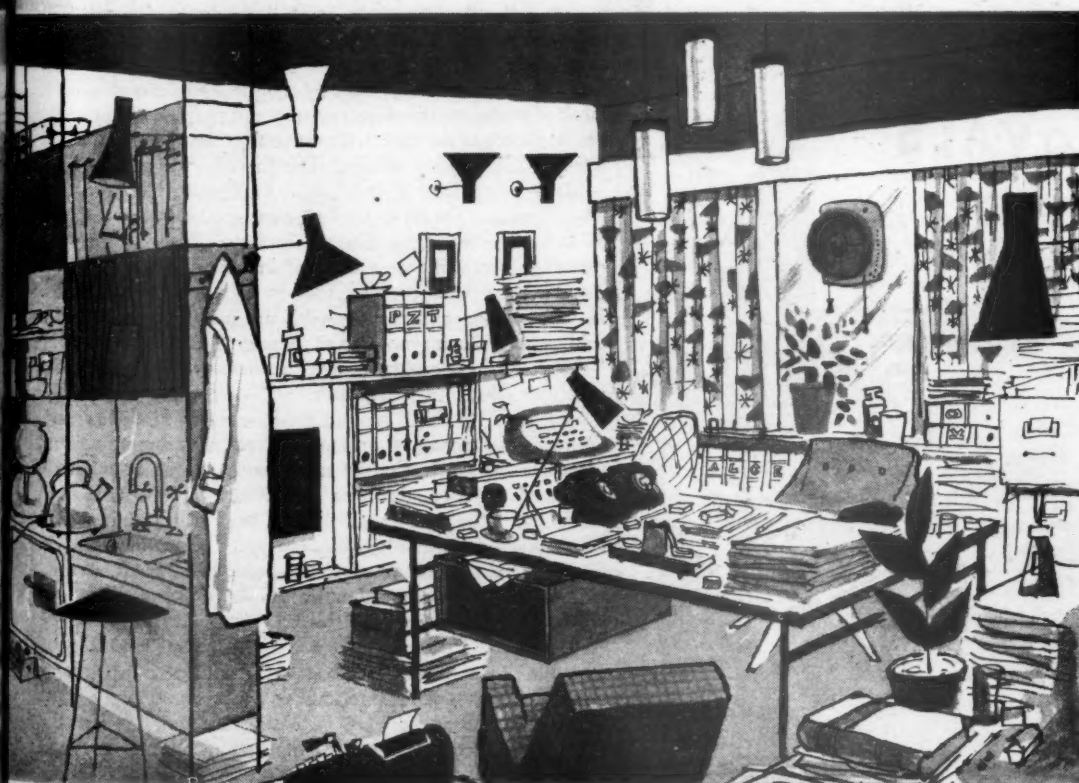


to provide more shelf-space, and replaced the gas-ring with a modern electric cooker capable if necessary of destroying compromising papers. Neat wall-cupboards were installed to hold the hats and coats that had hitherto been hung, exposed to the air, on a Victorian hatstand.

Finally I removed the musty old curtains from the window and fitted an extractor-fan of sufficient capacity to cope with Mr. Atropos's cigars, and had all dangerous machinery fenced off in accordance with current factory practice. (It is not generally realized what extremely dangerous machines the telephone and the typewriter can be.) A few indoor pot-plants added a human touch.

Naturally it took the staff some time to get used to the

changes. They complained that there was now even less room than before; that the new desk had not sufficient drawers in it; that the extractor-fan excluded such little daylight as had come in previously; that the boy had enough to do without watering a lot of aspidistras; that the new cups I had provided to replace the old earthenware mugs were too valuable to put into the new dishwashing machine; and that to type a letter or answer the telephone practically required an amendment to the Factory Acts. When I pointed out that almost all these alterations would be mandatory if Mr. Marsh's bill were to be passed, Mr. Lachesis said that in that case he would write to his M.P. and make sure it never was passed. He added that his M.P. owed him money anyway.



after
treatment

The Blue Sea, or the Perils of Parody

By A. P. H.

I SHOULD have known better. I had been warned—twice.

I have always been against "practical jokes." But long ago I was on the rude Atlantic on April 1, returning to Britain in a banana boat from Jamaica. The usual meagre meal of Radio News was provided every morning, and one of the officers suggested that on All Fools Day I should concoct some special news to brighten the lives of the passengers. I did: and the officer pinned it on the board. Health is a big subject at sea—there is so little else to talk about: and among my political and general news I inserted two startling health stories. A new disease called *inertia præcox* was raging in England (especially in the West Country, to which we were bound). The Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race might well be postponed, for there were three or four cases in each of the crews. The disease was of foreign origin, and every ship arriving in England had to do two days in quarantine. There was a bit about Professor Somebody who in an address to the Royal Hypochondriacal Society had deprecated the modern craze for vitamins. "The latest researches show," he said, "that an excessive vitamin intake, especially in the form of fruit, may be dangerous to health."

All the morning I listened, rather guiltily, to my fellow-passengers gravely discussing the news. The two small

health-stories disturbed them very much more than the revolutions, earthquakes, fallen governments and tidal waves that I had invented in South America and elsewhere. They were worried, naturally, about *inertia præcox*, and the probable delay at Avonmouth. They drafted careful cables to hotels and relatives. Many of them shrewdly connected the Professor's pronouncement on vitamins with this alarming new disease; and there were animated but inconclusive debates on the vitamin-intake of the average man. The green sea of bananas in the hold was inspected every four hours. Any bunch that showed a tiny tinge of yellow was hauled out (for ripening, it seems, is contagious) and hung on deck. There the fruit ripened rapidly and the passengers helped themselves as they passed. But on this morning I heard one old lady after another say "My dear, no bananas to-day. You read the news, didn't you—about the fruit and this new disease? Just fancy! Two days in quarantine!"

At noon, according to custom, we began to confess our foolery, myself with alacrity, for I was sorry for our victims. One by one, I took them aside, and told them that *inertia præcox* was a myth, that vitamins could do no harm. But very soon I desisted: for they would not believe me. "Don't be silly," they said, "I saw it myself—in the news—this morning." I told them that I had written the news myself, and they laughed—loudly, some of them, for they thought that I was trying to be funny; unkindly, others, for they thought me conceited. "Nobody," they said, "could have invented that." "Great is Truth," no doubt, "and it will prevail," as the Roman said. But it will have a tough gallop to catch anything that has appeared in print—or even type. It is not for anyone who lives by the pen and press to make a mock of credulity, the principal prop and purpose of our craft: but it disturbed me then. Three or four days later old ladies were still obstinately refusing their morning bananas.

Many years later I had cause to deplore all "practical jokes" again. I went to Copenhagen, not long after the war, to lecture to the Anglo-Danish Society. The lecture went pretty well, and the next day, rather pleased with myself, I was lunching with the secretary in a delightful grill-room. He showed me a newspaper with my name at the top of a column and, having no Danish, I said "What does it say?" "Well," he said, rather coolly, "it seems you're a bit of a practical joker, Mr. Haddock." "Never!" I said hotly. "Well, listen to this," he said. "It was Mr. Haddock who, with a friend, roped off an area in Piccadilly, dug a hole and for some days diverted the traffic with imaginary repairs." "What?" I yelled. "It was Mr. Haddock," he continued smoothly, "who, in Piccadilly again, bet Sir John Simon that he could not run a hundred yards in under 10 seconds. When Sir John said 'But how shall we know?' Mr. Haddock said 'Here, take my stopwatch,' and when Sir John had run twenty yards, he said 'Stop thief! He's got my watch.'" "Sir John Simon!" I gasped. "It was Mr. Haddock who stopped a man in St. James's Street and said 'Would you mind holding the end of this tape for a minute? We're surveying.' Then he went round the corner, gave the other end to another stranger, walked away and left the helpful citizens to themselves. It was Mr. Haddock—"



Every single one of the late Horace Cole's misadventures was put down to poor Haddock. I left the country at once.

Ocean travel can corrupt the best of us. Years later, after the war, I was in the Red Sea, returning from Australia in the good ship *Orchid*. It was a Gala Night. With sober elation I surveyed the wondrous scene, of which the note was indomitably blue—the sea, the sky, were Oxford blue, Sirius and Canopus, and a few others, Cambridge. Suddenly, it occurred to me—"The Red Sea!" What a ridiculous—and what a repellent—name!"

It was the work of a few minutes only to found the Blue Sea Club.

Here are some extracts from the minutes of the first meeting.

"(2) The Purser, Mr. E. W. String, was elected permanent President.

(3) The following Rules were then adopted.

(i) All members shall invariably refer to the relevant stretch of water as the BLUE SEA.

(ii) Any member who hears another person refer to the RED SEA shall correct him with the words "You mean the BLUE SEA."

(iii) There shall be no other rules.

(4) A telegram was then sent to Sir Winston Churchill. His reply will be circulated later."

A few days later I sent the members the following cable "as from" (for once, used correctly) the Right Honourable Sir Winston Churchill:—

STRING PRESIDENT BLUE SEA CLUB R.M.S. ORCHID BLUE SEA
I WAS VERY GLAD TO HEAR OF THE FORMATION OF THE BLUE SEA CLUB IN FAMOUS ORCHID STOP AS A SCHOOLBOY IT OCCURRED TO ME THAT RED WAS A FOOLISH AND UNFITTING APPELLATION FOR ANY PORTION OF THE SEAS AND OCEANS STOP TODAY THERE ARE STILL MORE POWERFUL REASONS FOR THE CHANGE THAT YOU PROPOSE STOP THE COLOUR RED COMMA IT IS TRUE COMMA IS A GRAND INGREDIENT OF THE UNION FLAG AND THAT GLORIOUS ENSIGN WHICH IS WORN BY THE MERCHANT VESSELS OF BRITAIN IN ALL THE WATERS OF THE WORLD COLON IT ALSO DISTINGUISHES THE VEHICLES AND RECEPTACLES OF HER MAJESTY'S MAILS STOP BUT IN THE FIELD OF POLITICAL AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS IT HAS ACQUIRED IN RECENT YEARS AN ODOUS AND PERILOUS SIGNIFICANCE STOP AT THE SOUND OF THE WORD RED THERE IS AN INSTINCTIVE STIR OF REPUGNANCE IN THE HEART OF EVERY DECENT CITIZEN OF THE WORLD COLON AND IN THE LANDS UNHAPPILY ADJACENT TO THE DOMAINS OF MOSCOW ALARM COMMA WELL FOUNDED COMMA IS ADDED TO DISGUST STOP HOW INAPPROPRIATE COMMA THEN COMMA AS YOU SAY COMMA MR PRESIDENT COMMA THAT THIS NOTORIOUS TITLE OF STUPIDITY AND TERROR SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO DISHONOUR THE BLUE AND PLACID WATERS THROUGH WHICH YOU STEAM TODAY STOP IN THE GREAT LAND MASSES ON EITHER SIDE OF YOU THE WHOLESOME DEEDS OF BRITAIN ARE KNOWN AND NUMEROUS STOP UP AND DOWN THESE WATERS THERE PASS IN CONTINUAL PROCESSION THE PROUD AND PEACEFUL SHIPS OF OUR NATION COMMA CARRYING FROM HEMISPHERE TO HEMISPHERE NOT ONLY THE BLESSINGS OF TRADE BUT THE LAMPS OF LIBERTY COMMA ENLIGHTENED LIVING COMMA KINDLY GOVERNMENT STOP WHETHER ON LAND OR WATER COMMA WHAT COMPARABLE CLAIM CAN BE MADE IN THOSE REGIONS BY THAT COMMITTEE OF MORONS AND MONSTERS WHO RULE IN THE RUSSIAN CAPITAL QUERY YET COMMA AS WE KNOW COMMA THEIR AMBITION IS AS BOUNDLESS AS THEIR IGNORANCE AND INHUMANITY STOP IF THEIR VAST AND WICKED DESIGNS WERE EVER FULFILLED THEY WOULD NOT STOP COMMA YOU MAY BE SURE COMMA AT THE RED SEA COLON RED OCEANS COMMA RED CONTINENTS COMMA WOULD DISFIGURE THE CHARTS AND MAPS



"Could you speed it up a little? The carp pond is almost fished out."

OF THE EARTH STOP GOD FORBID THAT THIS OLD AND DECENT PLANET SHOULD EVER COME TO SUCH A PASS EXCLAMATION BUT COMMA MEANWHILE COMMA THE MERE EXISTENCE OF A STRETCH OF WATER WITH THAT ILL OMENED AND DETESTED NAME MAY COMMA AS WE SAY COMMA PUT IDEAS INTO THOSE CHILDISH MINDS STOP LET US THEREFORE COMMA BY ALL MEANS COMMA EXPEL THAT NAME FROM THE MAPS COMMA THE MOUTHS COMMA THE VERY MINDS OF CIVILIZED MEN STOP THIS COMMA I THINK COMMA WOULD BE A GOOD JOB FOR THAT QUEER BODY UNESCO STOP BUT IT MAY WELL BE TOO MUCH FOR THE CUMBRIOUS MACHINERY OF INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY COMMA SO EASILY PUT OUT OF ACTION BY THE SAND OF JEALOUSY OR THE SPANNER OF INTRIGUE STOP THIS MAY WELL BE A CASE WHERE MORE CAN BE DONE BY A MOVEMENT OF ORDINARY MEN COMMA ESPECIALLY THE MARINERS WHO HAVE THEIR BUSINESS IN THOSE WATERS AND CAN CARRY SOUND DOCTRINE TO ALL PORTS OF THE WORLD STOP THEREFORE COMMA MR PRESIDENT COMMA I AM PROUD THAT YOU HAVE MADE ME A FOUNDATION MEMBER OF YOUR CLUB COMMA AND I WISH YOU WELL IN YOUR WORK STOP LET ME KNOW FROM TIME TO TIME HOW IT GOES STOP SAIL ON AND PROSPER STOP

WINSTON CHURCHILL COLLECT

TREASURER BLUE SEA CLUB ORCHID

The small word "collect" which means, children, that the recipient is to pay the charges, was put in to amuse the Purser. But the document, by accident, reached the Captain of the *Orchid*, who was heard saying rather crossly: "Now see what you've done with your silly jokes! Thirty-nine pounds! And who's going to pay it?"

☆

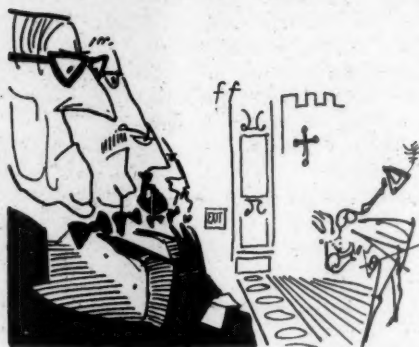
"UNPAID TAXES TO BE WRITTEN OFF
More Polish Austerity"

Guardian headlines

Any austerity going on this side of the curtain?

"All power is delightful. Absolute power is absolutely delightful."—Kenneth Tynan

Little Brief Authority



Catch a Critic by the Toe - By Sam Wanamaker

TO commission an actor-director to write about critics is asking for trouble. To commission a controversial actor-director to do so is fraught with even greater dangers. Over the past years in this precarious profession the theatre I have been building a mountainous grudge against these creatures based, needless to say, on their somewhat less-than-kind criticism of me and my work. It was once wisely said of me "You seem to bring out the beast or best in people," and with a faint glimmer of a blush and a shy downcast glance I must admit my chief talent appears to be that of provoking controversy.

To top everything else I am a "riser to occasions," the patsy who always answers back, who hasn't learned to keep his trap shut and "take it" because "it doesn't do you any good anyway" and because "They always have the last word." True. True. And then there are the bits about "hurting your reputation," "they'll bait you, you know" and "sock one critic and they all get defensive." All true. Yet I still wistfully dream of discovering the vulnerability of critics—attack and counter-attack obviously is not the secret.

My wife advises caution: "Be general," she says, "you'll only get into more trouble." She's right, of course, but how am I to write of critics, or even think of the breed, without my adrenals and other suchlike glands leaping into action, pumping all kinds of secretions into my bloodstream which race them

up to my brain, causing hot steam to emit from my nostrils, strangled inarticulate sounds from my mouth, and overstimulating my lungs, blood pressure and heart-beat? "Civilization," I tell myself in an effort to arrest these animal passions, "is the control of the basic and perhaps baser instincts of self-preservation, and the diverting of these energies into more socially accepted channels." Several hundred thousand years of practice, however, have proved that the exercise of self-restraint is still unhappily only a superficial gloss on the innate bestiality of man (the hydrogen bomb being exhibit A); nevertheless, I'll try.

The word "critic" is a genetic term and must be clearly defined before we proceed. After washing carefully we pick up our sterilized instruments and discover that it is an employee in the pay of—aha!—newspapers and magazines, and therefore comes under the general heading of journalist. (Since the qualifications for the job of critic are so ill-defined, vague and indeterminate that *anybody* can be it—and usually is—we must consider only those lucky enough to be *paid* for writing criticism.) Of these there are two main species: those whose editors write "All I can do is employ the best qualified critics and allow them to say what they think," and the other kind: the *least* qualified critics who are *not* allowed to say what they think. The existence of the latter variety is hotly denied by them and they staunchly believe themselves! These two types cover the various

categories of writing about theatre, films, music, art, ballet, opera, literature, radio (now nearly extinct) and the recent Hydra, television—in short what is commonly known as culture and entertainment.

Since it is difficult to generalize about the activities of this breed without always making qualifications about those-who-think-they-can-say-what-they-think, and those-who-pretend-to-think-they-can-say-what-they-think, I propose to deal only with the lordly types who live in the rarefied atmosphere of "independence." I'm still a little uncertain into which category now to place the Beaverbrook clan, since some sort of high policy shift seems to have been effected. What frightens me a little is the pride with which the *Express* takes half a page to display proudly the quotation of another writer describing its drama-critic as a "hired play assassin" and "The Terror of West End Theatre Managers." I fear that whereas their policy when reviewing an opera heretofore has been "Callas Feuds with Conductor," to-day it would be "Callas Makes Me Vomit."

I don't really wish to spoil their fun, but those eminent types who preen themselves on their independence ought to give a thought about whether the staid and ultra-conservative *Times* would employ a leftish tinged critic like John Berger, or whether the *New Statesman* would be happy about the idea of paying the salary of a Socialist-hater like Harold Hobson. Independence? "Well, yes, if you think the way I do."

Even such a distinguished authority as my *Oxford Dictionary* (pocket size) is as sceptical of the quality of criticism these days as I am: "Critic: *n.*, person who attempts or is skilled in criticism." One need only to "attempt" to write criticism to be properly called a critic! They define *criticism* as "Judging of merit of works of art and literature . . . expression and exposition of such judgment, any detail of such exposition esp. the pointing out of a fault, censure." Note that "esp." (especially) "the pointing out of a fault, censure"! I can see every fledgling critic (the O.U.D.S. wonder boys) picking up his *Oxford*—(natch)—*Dictionary* and reading: "especially pointing out a fault, a censure!" Definition supplied, no doubt, by an Old Boy retired critic. But I don't agree. The business of

criticism is more than "especially pointing out a fault," etc., or even of the virtues and merits of a work of art or the artist. It is the quintessence of adulthood and maturity, of experience and understanding, of humility and sensitivity, the distillation of which is objective sober judgment.

It is a fact that among the journalists writing criticism to-day some were sports writers, others are ballet critics reviewing plays and television, book reviewers writing about plays and theatre, gossip columnists "covering" films, bad composers reviewing music, and lousy actors writing three columns a week on Theatre. Tynan's inept and pathetically embarrassing exhibition as an actor in the Guinness version of *Hamlet* put into the shade the mechanical disaster of that celebrated first night.

Not long after, this chrysalis had blessedly shed his actor's skin and emerged from the cocoon as the *enfant terrible* (English translation: terrible infant) of the London theatre critics, toppling irreverently the once sacred Ivor Brown and causing Mr. Hobson palpitations as he sits uneasily on his V.I.P. throne of critics. Having conquered Great Britain, Mr. Tynan now flexes his muscles atop Mount *New Yorker* and has candles lit to him in the temple at Sardi's, The Holy Shrine of Broadway. I call this the phenomenal rise from slob to sage. Shaw said "He who can, does; he who can't, teaches." This is a generalization which can often be applied to critics. In the case of Tynan, once over the adolescent urge to stick his venomous little stinger into everyone's backside to prove what a big



boy he was he appears to be making an attempt to be an honest critic. No more serious perhaps than a case of regurgitation brought on by a rich diet of higher education—cramming being considered synonymous with genius. There are many other and similar examples of failed “doers” becoming successful teachers, by itself a laudatory achievement. But to venture a perhaps ingenuous opinion, a bad “doer” must more often than not be a bad teacher, a bad judge, and a bad critic.

On the matter of *influence* most critics, with a studied air of modesty, will state that they are not concerned with the artist—their obligation is to the reader, the public. This is mainly the argument in reply to the outraged squeals of the wounded victims concerned. They insulate themselves against such encounters by maintaining an air of high impersonal objectivity, free from the muffled cries of protest and the crashing sounds of hope crumbling, dedicated careers smashed, months and sometimes years of work made dust and ashes. As to the reading public, they do not often challenge him. Either they have not seen the work in question, or are too uncertain of their own views in the face of such supreme authority, or too busy, too tired, too unconcerned to

bother about writing a letter to the editor. One critic, manifestly spokesman for the tribe, maintains that the principal function of criticism is *readability*. “Read me, quote me, discuss me” is the legend embroidered on the crest of such. The chief preoccupation with many of them seems to be the polishing of their particular style; the turn of phrase, the sparkling wit, the scintillating sophistication, the smart opening, the flourish finish, the diamond-hard cutting remark, the multi-syllable word-dazzler—“That’ll send ’em scurrying to their dictionaries!”—the French quotation expert, the Latin quotation expert, the *really* literate Greek quotation expert; the truly conscientious chap, who has crammed on the subject, describing Duse’s remarkable performance in the same part, played before his parents knew each other; the Shakespeare expert who delights in pointing out what the Third Folio version of the line was, and “How dare they cut that beautiful iambic couplet?” and “Where was the music of the verse?”; the danger of being known as “too soft,” the competition to be “hard”; the pontificator who feels it his responsibility to write for posterity and how his criticism will read bound together in two volumes entitled

“Dramatic Essays.” To be known as “The Terror of The West End Theatre Managers” seems to be a highly desirable appellation.

In some areas of the entertainment field the influence of the critic is slight. The people who pay hard cash to make *Carry On Nurse* and the Norman Wisdom films the most consistently successful in Britain do not read the film critics; the coach parties that pour into the Whitehall Theatre farces have not bothered to read the theatre reviews. The TV Westerns top the poll despite any attacks from the critics, and the blasts from music and other critics on Liberace’s performances caused him, it was said, to “cry all the way to the bank.”

In the serious fields of art the story is, on the other hand, quite the reverse. Here the critic is all-powerful and wields that power in which he so delights. The critic will demur. “Let me totally reject your notion about a critic . . . being so powerful” wrote one whose review under discussion was headed “SPECTACULAR FLOP FOR MR. WANAMAKER.” He went on to say in the article “If a posse of indignant viewers had been reported at Shepherds Bush clamouring ‘Wanamaker Go Home’ I should not have been at all surprised.” This was read by several hundred thousand people. The justification for such a venomous personal attack was that “it was meant, and I think would be so interpreted by adult viewers, as a protest against the general inanity of the play.” What disingenuous rubbish! What proportion of the people who read this literary viciousness had seen the TV play? Twenty per cent? Perhaps more, perhaps less. The rest read it, and no doubt most of them accepted and believed what they read. Their judgment in the matter could play no part in the matter.

In the theatre the most important critics are not necessarily good critics. They are important solely because they alone, or together with one or two others, can make or break a play. I daresay the same is true to a degree in other mediums. They are important to the artist, to the playwright, to the producer and manager, because what the critic writes means either survival or death. In economic terms it is often a matter of security or privation not as an individual alone but for whole



“New Year without Mrs. Richley’s parties wouldn’t be anything, Fred.”



families with children. From the viewpoint of functioning at one's job it may mean months of idleness and enervating frustration and bitterness.

The New York theatre critics are often referred to as "The Butchers of Broadway." Americans delight in appropriate euphemisms and this one is particularly apt. By comparison the West End theatre critic wields much greater power. In New York advance booking is a common and accepted practice by the public; some plays and musicals often sell more than half a million dollars' worth of tickets before the first night. In London the outlook is much more leisurely, and advance bookings for the average show opening in London is hardly ever more than an amount equal to perhaps two or three weeks' run of the show. If the New York critics dislike a play the advance booking insures that at least the people who have bought tickets will come and see the show. As the gentlemen most graciously admit, public taste is often at variance with theirs and this allows what is known as "word of mouth" to operate. If the majority of the people like the play they tell their friends and acquaintances, discuss the play favourably, and thus further advance bookings are made. In this way a success can be achieved in spite of the critics. Here in London, if the important critics slate a play no advance bookings, no audience, no word-of-mouth, no further bookings—play flops. It might have been a good play and liked by the audience, but they stayed away because the critics told them to. Remember, the "important" critics are those who write for *The Times*, *Telegraph*, *Express*, *Sunday Times*, *Observer*, and some of the more sophisticated or adult magazines. What is significant is not so much the size of their readership but what proportion are theatregoers.

A smug critic once wrote "By the artist's standards a good critic is one who praises him." The truth is more deplorable than Mr. Smug may think. It is indeed a sad state of affairs when the artist, cap in hand, depends for his next job or his next sale on the reference his employer will give him. The employer may be a stupid, complacent, fat-minded bully, but he is a "good" employer if he gives him a good reference. Managers, agents, dealers, impresarios read the critics closely and are influenced strongly by them if the public are not.

The responsibilities of the critic are greater than he may appreciate. Apart from his readability (they would attack a painter for his attractability, an actor for his charm, a musician for his virtuosity, a writer for his slickness) another more important responsibility is the one the critic has to the artist. No one, least of all I, denies the value and importance of criticism. One critic in an understatement of sparkling brilliance said "The age-long cry of the artist and the child: Love me, understand me, praise me." He then goes on to revel in his Victorian concept of parenthood: "But the good parent must sometimes harden her heart against her child and refuse." Either this gentleman is not a parent or his children must be repressed little monsters, having had love handed out to them as rewards for so much good behaviour.

The creative process in the making of a work of art is a heartbreaking, back-breaking, soul-sweating effort. It requires love and devotion and sacrifice. Because of this an artist, like a child, must never be in doubt that he is cared for and loved. If you do not love him, or think you can dole out love in bits and pieces, you had better pack up the idea of being a parent or a critic;



ROY DAVIS

you will botch your job—you will destroy the child-artist. If a child misbehaves *deliberately* (and artists seldom misbehave deliberately) you teach him the errors of his ways. If a child-artist does something wrong, breaks a dish, spills his milk, you don't bark at him, rap him over the knuckles, stand him in a corner or banish him from the country: you teach him, you show him, you help him (with love—always with love), knowing that he can be easily hurt, his confidence destroyed and his will to learn impeded.

To do this a critic (or a parent) must be a sensitive human being himself, able to recognize that the most important element of art is the artist. Without him art cannot exist. To nurture him, to recognize him, to foster him should be the objective of everyone who dares to have the courage to be a critic.

This, and not the sweet taste of "absolute power," is the true function of the critic.

Next Week: The Age of Speed,
by J. B. Morton.

Toby Competitions

No. 95—Spine-Chiller

COMPETITORS are asked to write a short-short ghost story involving one of the following: (a) a type-writer; (b) an electronic computer; (c) a helicopter; (d) a TV set; (e) a hot-dog. Limit: 150 words.

A prize consisting of a framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up will receive a book token to the value of one guinea. Entries by first post on Friday, January 15, to TOBY COMPETITION No. 95, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Result of Competition No. 92 (Happily Ever After)

Competitors were asked to supply the final paragraph of a fairy story, and came up with a large and varied selection of happy endings, including some very highly-wrought pieces of prose in the manner of Oscar Wilde. The winner is:

MRS. H. FOSTER
34 FARNDON ROAD
WOODFORD HALSE
NR. RUGBY

Then the fairies told the Queen Bee that the wise men who had been snooping around the hive had published the meaning of the bees' dances, being very impressed because their own dances were meaningless romps. The Queen Bee was surprised and

sent a Commission of wise bees to study human dances. Returning, they confirmed the fairies' story. The Queen studied their report and decided that, if the workers were not too tired, an occasional "meaningless romp" in the evenings, with suitable honey drinks on tap, might boost morale and the honey output. Now there is a great pothole among the wise men, who cannot agree on the subtle meaning of the newly discovered "Bees' Sunset Dances."

The following earn book tokens:

People flocked to see John in his converted bus on Clapham Common. Some of them had simple questions. These were ordinary people, but of course not so wonderfully ordinary and reasonable as the Good Fairy had made John. Others were famous people, and often went away sadder and wiser. For even when John said "I don't know," that only proved that there was something wrong with the law, or the politics, or the soap, or whatever else the question was about. John got so many samples of things to eat and drink and wear that he never had to work.—*Andrew Leslie, Camborne, South Drive, Cheam*

Immediately Penny uttered the words "blue chips" she realized she had broken a spell. The monster Inflation had vanished, leaving in its place a handsome young duke in a Brigade tie. They immediately opened a joint bank-account, the ceremony being graced by the presence of the President of the Stock Exchange, and, just as the wedding-cake was being cut, Penny's fairy-godmother Lady Pound-Sterling, now recovered from

anæmia, appeared. She announced she had made a successful takeover bid for Piccadilly Circus, which would be developed as a monster fun-fair and belong to the happy pair. So, as industrial equities advanced on a broad front, Penny and the Duke lived happily ever after with their dividends.—*C. L. Lyall, 5 Weston Road, Petersfield, Hants*

"Just look, what a hurry they are all in to get below ground again," said Little Waus (whose other name was Commoncensus), pointing to the human sheep.

"Yes, I see," replied Big Waus (or H-cephalus), "but if I do not get enough to consume down there, I will bang you like nothing on earth, take my word for it." He peered eagerly over the edge of the shaft. "Come now, make haste, I want to be off."

So Little Waus shot him down without compunction and put a heavy stone on top to ensure that others would understand why. For the stone said: PEOPLE ARE NOT ALL SHEEP. Then he strolled home through peaceful Aldermaston.—*J. A. Lindon, 89 Terrace Road, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey*

... and then the princess went to see her fairy-godmother who told her that although there was nothing seriously wrong with her she was not getting enough of that deep, satisfying sleep that relaxes the body and restores the nerves, and advised her to drink every night, before sleeping, a cup of the magic potion which she would give her. The princess did as she was told and a few weeks later she was sprinting through the grounds of her father's castle when she met a prince (who had been told the secret of personal freshness by a close friend) and they fell in love, married, and lived happily ever after—thanks to...—*C. F. Boucher, 40 Victoria Road, Maldon, Essex*

THEN AS NOW

Du Maurier created the idea of the "tall girl." He is said to have added inches (vertically) to British womanhood.



ANNALS OF A QUIET NEIGHBOURHOOD.

Mrs. — and her friends very properly resolve to turn over a new leaf this year, and to give up discussing, whenever they meet, the little weaknesses, do, do, do, of their friends and neighbours.

January 31 1883

Death of a Music-Hall

SPINDLE-legged above the ruins
Of proscenium and dome
Lean grey vulture cranes are pecking
At a stricken Hippodrome.

Silenced now the flute and fiddle,
Gone the laughter of the gods;
Cherub now and caryatid
Await the demolition squads.

Soon an office block will burgeon,
Big tycoons will play their scenes,
And the Remingtons will echo
Long-forgotten dance routines.

Will the old enchantment linger
When the cold new concrete comes?
Will the Chairman rise at meetings
To a ghostly roll of drums?

Shall we see the Chief Accountant
Take a bow, as artists do,
Every time his sleight-of-hand
Astounds the Inland Revenue?

— RODNEY HOBSON



How Much Higher?

THREE decades ago the great crack in the stock markets had begun two months before the turn of the year and had marked the transition from the tumultuous 'twenties to the dismal and fearful 'thirties. This time there is no hint of a comparable break between the two decades. In the stock markets the 1950s have departed in a blaze of strength and activity. Never has business been so brisk just before and after the holiday break. One cannot recall a take-over bid staged on Christmas Eve as was the case this year with the Metal Industries—Lancashire Dynamo deal.

This ebullience should not be confused with that of just over thirty years ago. Very little of the recent speculation in stocks and shares has been done on borrowed money, in contrast to the thin and highly vulnerable margin operations that passed muster in the late 1920s. In the United States, where the crack began, the banks are now above suspicion. A recurrence of the collapse of the whole financial system, such as occurred in 1933, would be unthinkable to-day.

The cult of the ordinary share which has been the hallmark of 1959 is likely to last well into 1960, though after the recent tremendous appreciation in prices its devotees will need rather more discrimination than has been required in the recent past. During the past three months the good old pin has been as trusty a guide as any to the Stock Exchange. With the *Financial Times* index of ordinary shares nearly three and a half times its pre-war level, the rise in prices which it reflects just about measures the average fall in the value of money. From now on the prizes will fall to the discerning rather than to the random speculator and investor.

The cult of the equity none the less remains as firmly based as ever. It is no longer primarily a haven of refuge in years of inflation—for the worst of inflation is probably behind us. Far more important is the fact that the

ordinary share secures for the holder a participation in the expansion of the economy. Fewer caveats attach to it now that monetary authorities have succeeded in smoothing the swings of the trade cycle. Investment Trusts and more recently Unit Trusts have provided the technique whereby even the modest investor can spread his risk over a large number of ordinary shares.

In Britain the cult of the equity is bound to be stimulated by the promised amendments of the Trustee Acts. It is a little late in the day for the Government to accept recommendations made to it by a committee of impressive authority in 1950 and turned down in 1955 on the ground that to put ordinary shares in the trustee list "might be regarded by the general public as conveying a measure of official guarantee of their suitability for investment." Many impoverished holders of War Loan will wish that this "guarantee" had been given in 1955 and not in 1960.

There is enough steam behind the



Supporting the Hunt

I SUPPOSE it was inevitable that the Hunt supporters' movement should filtrate through to our part of the country sooner or later, and sure enough our own Hunt supporters' club burst into being with a grand recruiting drive launched at the point-to-point. No one quite knew what the club was meant to do, but everyone agreed that it was a very good thing, and the Master gave it as his considered opinion that every section of the community stood to benefit from its formation.

Foot and wheeled followers have for long outnumbered mounted ones, but never had their strength become fully apparent until they stood eagerly around at the opening meet all wearing the badge that symbolized their unity and resolve. The supporters were everywhere, and of course whenever a fox left covert one of them always seemed to be lying in wait to block his way. Incorporation appeared to have sharpened their zeal.

boom in equities to carry the movement somewhat further. Taking the long view, the kind of view that trustees are likely to take when they gain their new investment freedom, bank shares must be rated high among the stocks that bear the promise of growth. Here are two selections. The first is Midland Bank which under Lord Monckton's chairmanship has recently cast a great deal of bread on the waters of keener competition and popularization of the banking habit. Its efforts will in due course reap rich rewards. The second is Barclays Bank. Its nicely judged combination of a giant and a cosy country bank has during the past year carried it to the head of the banks' league table. Its loans to customers during the past year have risen by around £200 millions. This will add a sizeable slice to profits, all of which will not of course be distributed or even disclosed, but which will strengthen an already strong institution.

— LOMBARD LANE

* * *

Obviously, the Master decreed, the club's first and foremost task must be to regiment its members, just as it was his to regiment the field, and Major Beddowes, the club's energetic organizer, at once applied himself to the task. But it is one thing, as he soon discovered, to bellow at a bunch of horsemen who are crowding one's hounds, quite another to quench the wanderlust of a widely assorted army of spectators. The club members did not feel in the least inclined to take a back seat, and Major Beddowes' address, entitled "Active Support is Passive Support," was not well attended.

But his resource is not easily drained. At the meet at Hickories he turned up in a loud-speaker van, and no sooner had hounds been put in to draw the first covert than there was a raucous crackle and the major's voice came through loud and clear. "All cars stationary please—everyone stand quite still—now those people by that gateway—yes, you with the green scarf, you don't want to head the fox, do you?" And so on.

The effect was miraculous. Every supporter was rooted to the spot, stupefied by the non-stop blare which rasped wood and valley. But they weren't the only ones. "Any more of this damned support," the Master muttered as he tried to collect his pack at covert side, "and my hounds'll be driven crazy."

— GREGORY BLAXLAND

Beauty in a Hot Climate

THIS week I am going to devote my page to those of you who live in warmer climates. Daily in my mailbag come letters from my wide circle of overseas readers asking my advice on their special beauty problems.

Perhaps the most universal problem is that one's skin and hair tend to become a little damp, especially when applying make-up by the light of a kerosene lamp. This unfortunate condition can be relieved considerably by placing the lamp well away from one's dressing table. It will then, of course, be quite impossible to see, but after a little practice one can get quite used to managing by touch. Another way to overcome this distressing condition is regular cool baths—hourly throughout the day is quite sufficient in most tropical climates—and to preserve that fresh cool look do remember never to do anything more strenuous than a little light reading between baths.

Diet too plays an important part in your beauty care, as indeed it does in all climates. Plenty of fresh crisp salads are ideal but do remember to check that your nearest doctor has on hand plenty of drugs for the treatment of amoebic dysentery.

Many of you, I know, suffer from disfiguring insect bites and this is truly one of your most distressing beauty problems. Perhaps nothing in the tropics causes those little lines around the eyes, the tell-tale wrinkles on the forehead, more quickly than ankles aflame with irritating bites. Here the solution is prevention. There are on the market many preparations for repelling insects. One I saw the other day in a West End shop was in a delightful little clear glass bottle with a charming white screw-cap. If any of you would like further details about these preparations please send me a stamped (U.K. postage) addressed envelope.

Whatever preparation you use, however, do always remember to cover yourself with it entirely. Many mosquitoes find they can bite very easily through cotton clothes, though on the whole they prefer an uncovered limb, and do rub it in your hair as well.

**FOR
WOMEN**



Your hair styles do, I know, present a problem, but here I think simplicity is the keynote. Do remember that the casual styles of to-day are the result of skilful cutting which your husband is unlikely to maintain in between your two-yearly visits to the hairdresser. Smooth, sleek hair tends to show the damp least and with a little training most husbands can learn to cut this style straight round from ear to ear. If you carry this style a step further and train a fringe straight across the brow you may with the judicious use of

mepacrin and a little sun simulate that svelte oriental look so often encouraged by dress designers.

Nothing repays a woman more than the hours spent in guarding her precious beauty. You will know, when the exciting day for home leave comes and you step from the plane to face the cool of the English winter, the mould of several years carefully brushed from your woollen clothes, that it is because, and only because, of these hours that you can confidently face your English sisters.

— C. M. MACNAMARA

Aurelio

MY friend bought him from a marquis on the Via Cassia. She got him cheap, but in the end he hasn't proved a bargain. It's not what he eats so much as what he nibbles: his appetite is quite small in fact, and when she forgets to feed him he doesn't seem to mind a lot; but he won't lay off mattresses and fur coats.

The only thing my friend's concerned about is whether they are good for his skin because his skin is rather nice; dove grey with an underglow of peach, it matches his delightful nose and tones with his off-yellow eyes.

He's a kind, nice dog but some people don't see it. My friend thinks this shows they're brittle (she finds non-dog-lovers basically brittle) but I think myself Aurelio is too stiff a test and quite sterling people could get him wrong. They might think he bit them out of malice, whereas he only bites for love, or they might misconstrue his vocal repertoire, which is vast and hideous but meant to show welcome, affection, bereavement and so on. He isn't a bitter, resentful dog, but he hasn't a very good ear, I'm afraid.

He isn't very intelligent either. It's one of the things that's touching about him how clueless he is. Levrieri used to be brainy a long time ago, but it's been bred right out of them. His ancestors in the Vatican Galleries are purposeful as well as pretty; and his mediaeval relatives, flitting through half uncials, though decorative, are not yet decadent—they'd know a hedgehog from a hare and what to do. Aurelio wouldn't. His father was a film star.

The only thing he knows about is comfort. For this he has a flair one admires without always condoning. One doesn't mind the way he jostles clothes and people till they fit him, insinuates a nose up a sleeve and a foot into a pocket—it makes one feel rather useful. But at night he goes too far. He loves his beds; and since the first thing my friend does when she takes a flat is to unscrew the doors, he has free ingress to them all. I try to pretend I'm not there, when I stay for a night, and hope the dread footfalls will go past the doorhole. But they don't and he burrows remorselessly in. He's surprisingly cuddly for so thin a dog, but

his feet are cold. The way he warms them makes one feel rather exploited.

These feet are the finish of legs so thin that my friend has to wear stiletto heels always or she'd look silly with him. His tibias and fibulas are like sticks of the best spaghetti and the light shows through the skin between; yet they support a chest that is briefly of tremendous depth before whittling away to nearly nothing. When my friend's mother knits his pullovers she has to do a lot of shaping.

Elegant and *chien du monde* he looks, in fact, especially in his pink with the polo neck. My friend is proud of his looks and is always going on about how prettily he pranced among the pines or what he looked like in the sunset.

"My dear!" she'll say, "I wish you'd seen him at Nettuno. He was purple."

And I choke perhaps, because I like Aurelio but I'm not besotted.

"Well," she says, incensed, "do all dogs change colour?"

He's a well-travelled dog; he's met a cousin in Capri and chewed carpets in Marseilles. England, of course, was out of the question and now, unfortunately, so is France: the douaniers have been alerted against Italian dogs. And he wouldn't smuggle easily; those barks would cut through any padded suitcase. So one doesn't know what's to become of him when his family visits France. There are kennels in the campagna, but hardly for Aurelio. Named after an Emperor and raised in a boudoir, where my friend sometimes does exquisite things like dabbing electric light bulbs with eau de Cologne, he couldn't be expected to go slumming. She's very worried about it. She doesn't know who's going to have him next month when she goes to France.

I know who isn't.

— MARY MORDUE

☆

Home Permanent

EITHER it comes out kinky curly
Or it hangs down straight and stark.

If I'm not a Temple (Shirley)
I'm a goddam Joan of Arc.

— J. F.

Interior Decoration Note

"WHEN you walk into a room you must see immediately that there is something to do there . . . Anything to show that it is lived in." Reading this newspaper upside down under the brussels sprouts I quote Tony Masters, décor expert and, bless him, the very first décor expert to make a mother up to the neck in school holidays feel her sitting-room is on the right tack after all.

Walk into ours any wet day now and you'll see immediately that someone's found something to do with the grand piano. Turned it into a honky-tonk harpsichord by putting the loud pedal down and shoving sheets of flimsy typing-paper along between the dampers and the strings. Someone else has found the lid a good park for a fishing-rod that has hooked a woollen glove, and the little platform beside the bottom notes the place for a model crane half-way through lifting a tiny Victorian silver chair by its arm.

Or perhaps you'll notice the books even more immediately. Other books get taken out and read and put back, but ours are *used*—to pave the carpet, or sandwich gramophone records between, or shelter a conclave of plush animals. The gaps in the shelves, as in any lived-in room, are filled with raw pastry sculpture. See the labels

identifying each figure? Never mind why the one in a hat is described as *Tunnickliffe's Automatic Greenhouse*, the point is that they were typed on this typewriter here. You didn't think that in such a trend-setting décor even a thirty-year-old portable would be content to sit about idly on an upturned tallboy drawer, did you?

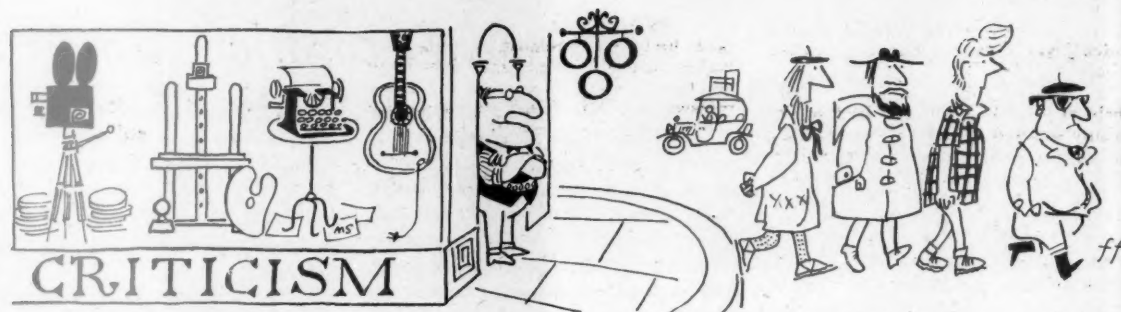
Take a look right round and pick up hints. The backs of armchairs, being amenable to huge safety-pins, make excellent notice-boards. A sofa will hold thirty-five pieces of miniature plastic crockery placed end to end. Why despair of your old mahogany tea-caddies? Emptied of playing-cards and tied to a yard of garden twine with a jeep for a counterweight they can be slung effectively over the window-latch.

In fact adding in the routine activities like the knitting on the piano-stool, the drifts of notebooks and construction kits under every small table, the apple-cores on the gramophone, and the ball-point pens and crayon-pencils absolutely everywhere, I feel proud of our sitting-room in a way I've never quite managed before. "*Something to do . . .*" Yes, I see what there is to do in this room all right but I can't start tidying while I'm getting the lunch, can I?

— ANGELA MILNE



"I've found someone for you to talk to, Mr. Henshaw."



BOOKING OFFICE

1492 and All That

The Innocents at Home. Lord Kinross.
John Murray, 21s.

IN 1492 Columbus discovered America; and people have been discovering it regularly ever since... in particular, the English. Throughout the nineteenth century, Englishmen went, often on short visits, filled their notebooks, and published the results. Dickens and Mrs. Trollope found the Americans vulgar and common, given to spitting in public and keeping their hats on indoors; Mathew Arnold was even sharper—America, he said, is not interesting.

The habit continues; the twentieth century has thrown up many books of travels, often products of a slight acquaintance with America and of a native English superiority. Some (like John Morris's) are good; some are bad. Common to most is an approach of

starry-eyed innocence—one that seems to extend to the suspicion that no one has written about America before (there are many good books on America, especially by Americans) and that the English view of what is going on over there has special value, like advice from father. Lord Kinross calls the Americans, in all affection, innocents, but really the Innocents are the British visitors, often quite as naive as Mark Twain's *Innocents Abroad*. This view is often mixed with a dark suspicion of this strange land, and all who in it dwell—an irksome approach, implying an instinctive superiority to our transatlantic and therefore irrevocably provincial cousins, who didn't have the stamina to put up with George III and who smoke, if reports are correct, between courses at dinner.

Lord Kinross starts out in something of this vein, but what is important is that he penetrates deeper and deeper as the book goes on. His observations are

skilled and witty; he travels widely through the very different areas of the country and the different social levels of its people; he takes the bus as well as the train and the plane. He makes many discoveries, most not new to sociologists but certainly new to the general reader; he inquires into Sleep Shops and Dale Carnegie courses, Alcoholics Anonymous and the Ku Klux Klan.

But the book is more than a travel book; there is a personal narrative running through it that illuminates the American character much more than the signs saying DONUTERIA and BOWL-ATORIUM, all the fancy dress parades of Williamsburg or Beverly Hills. Lonely in New York, Kinross has a taxi-driver one day, a young man named Harry, who proves to have artistic, creative interests, and is a friend of many writers and artists. Through Harry, he comes on a strain in the American character of the utmost importance, that of the thwarted artistic intelligence, the deep, restless, disturbed mind, at once cultured and neurotic, which is in some ways the haunted artistic soul of America. He meets John Latouche, the librettist responsible for the excellent folk opera *The Ballad of Baby Doe* (and some of the libretto of *Candide*) who dies in the course of the book, aged 38. Many American artists have been given to tragedy—Scott Fitzgerald, Hart Crane, Harry Crosby—and it squares with the painful psychological intensity with which they bear the moral burdens of America. The impact of this death (complicated by a police investigation) is great, both on Harry and Lord Kinross. It is an American tragedy, and says much about the pangs of the serious life in America; the important thing is that the serious life exists.

Anyone who read Lord Kinross's articles on America in *Punch* and enjoyed them will appreciate the well-observed, witty, extended treatment in the book. The other theme adds to this sympathy and understanding. One of the better books on America by Englishmen. —MALCOLM BRADBURY

THESE LOOKS SPEAK VOLUMES

A Panorama of Publishers



16. RUPERT HART-DAVIS

BORN 1907. Educated at Eton, Balliol and the Old Vic. After a year at the Lyric, Hammersmith, moved into publishing as the office boy at Heinemann's, but two years later was translated to managing the Book Society. Was a director of Jonathan Cape for seven years before the war, in which he served in the Coldstream Guards. Founded the firm that bears his name in 1946. Proud of having kicked off with Henry James and *Gamesmanship*. Wrote a biography of Hugh Walpole in 1952. Chairman of London Library Committee 1957. Gives one an unsettling glimpse of the way publishers work by describing reading as a recreation.

LIVELY MINDS

James Joyce. Richard Ellmann. *Oxford University Press*, 63/-

As befits its subject, this is a white whale of a book—eight hundred pages, lavishly indexed and illustrated, written with a scholarship, a distinction and an easy flow that conceal the hard bones of critical substructure that lie beneath. The long agony of the artist has never been so faithfully recorded. To an extent almost unequalled in literature (except possibly by the Marquis de Sade who, after all, was in prison or an asylum for most of his writing life) Joyce was a solitary. Rilke and Kafka led heady social lives compared with him. Though poverty, blindness and his daughter's insanity dogged his fifty-eight years, his style was not learned from a despair. It was the conscious (some would say the all-too-conscious) manufacture and elaboration of genius. Those who decry Joyce as a literary onanist—and there are signs that a critical reaction is beginning here at least, if not in America—will have no use for Mr. Ellman's meticulous researches. The rest of us will remain staggered and indebted.

—J. N. B. R.

Molière: The Comic Mask. D. B. Wyndham Lewis. *Eyre and Spottiswoode*, 25/-

The features of Molière are "alert, whimsical, sardonic, those of a born comedian." They are "lined and worn, like Garrick's, by fifty thousand grimaces a year." The mask of Molière is a mask at once "rubbery with perpetual muscular play and leathery from perpetual paint." And behind the comic mask is the tormented husband of Armande Béjart; and behind the tragic mask is the author of uproarious comedies. In this, the first English biography to appear for some years, Mr. D. B. Wyndham Lewis raises the curtain on the rueful comedy of Molière's own life from his birth in 1622 (exact date undiscoverable) to his premature death in 1673. He blends the story of the life with an appreciation of the work, and he does so with gaiety, scholarship and style, in a book which should be prescribed sixth-form reading as well as a constant pleasure to adult readers.

—J. R.

Brecht: A Choice of Evils. Martin Esslin. *Eyre and Spottiswoode*, 35/-

This is a valuable book for clearing the mind after all the blether about the Master. Mr. Esslin writes objectively and without jargon, and makes the following main points: in spite of his unwashed exhibitionism, Brecht was a genius; although it remains to be proved that "epic theatre" has any validity apart from his own works, he was the most important German playwright of this century; but his plays are important—and here is the surprise—not for their revolutionary content but for their

"memorable speech." Brecht was a poet first and foremost, writing in a highly personal idiom, and though no one would guess it from his English translations, Mr. Esslin is persuasive about this. Unlike many of Brecht's hot trumpeters, he knows German.

He gives the clearest explanation yet of the aim of "epic theatre" (it was largely taken from Piscator's earlier experiments—Brecht was a great plagiariser) and of why Brecht became a Communist. Even so, a sly peasant to the end, he kept an Austrian passport and gave his copyrights to a West German publisher.

—E. O. D. K.

Frederick Delius. Sir Thomas Beecham. *Hutchinson*, 30/-

There is nothing at all in the blurb writer's claim that this book, which has been hatching for nearly thirty years, exposes the "ambiguity and legend" of previous biographies. For all his long friendship with Delius, privileged access to letters and co-operation by the composer's widow, Sir Thomas's narrative subtracts in no way from earlier sources (principally Eric Fenby and the late Cecil Gray) and supplements them hardly at all. Delius wrote nostalgic and mannered music which bemuses many and repels not a few. Paradoxically, the autumnal beauty of his art proceeded from a glibbing and ruthlessly self-centred nature which, in old age, was increasingly sealed off from common humanity by the ravages of syphilis. Beecham says his music will live. One would have been readier to concede this if he had given chapter and verse for his astonishing claim that Delius is performed twice as much nowadays than he was ten years ago.

—C. R.

MEN AGAINST THE ELEMENTS

The Red Rocks of Eddystone. Fred Majdalany. *Longmans*, 21/-

There have been four lighthouses on the terrible Eddystone reef off Plymouth and each had to be built against impossible odds. There were many months when terrible seas made the slippery, bare, tilted stones unapproachable. Mr. Majdalany treats his subject as a step in the history of safety, a step in the history of engineering and a step in the history of man's fight against a hostile Nature. Although he tries too hard to be racy and picturesque, when he forgets to bribe his readers he is gripping. The best parts of the book are the very clear descriptions of the engineering problems and the ingenuity with which they were solved.

There are many curious sidelights on the lighthouse world. Metal-framed kites are used for fishing: quarrels are such a serious danger that the men on duty keep all their rations strictly separate: the builder of the present lighthouse used to play flute solos to his team which attracted large numbers of puffs.

—R. G. G. P.



The Grey Seas Under. Farley Mowat. *Michael Joseph*, 18/-

The owners of the Foundation Company of Montreal, as Mr. Mowat sees them, are less than Olympians only by contrast with the immediately heroic scale of the seamen who work for them in the bitter waters of the Western Atlantic. Typical of all such men whose workaday business has to do with life, death and the elements, are the crew of the *Foundation Franklin*, once a deep-sea tug H.M.S. *Frisky* which the firm picked up derelict in a Hamburg shipyard in 1930.

Her engines were magnificent, her frame icebreaker-strong. Refurbished, she butted her head into the collar of the sea and off the Newfoundland coast went about her salvage work in the hands of the men whose portraits Mr. Mowat draws with something of Bone's brass-bound forthrightness. The most testing days were to come: days spent "tethered to fat, crippled merchantmen crawling on a straight course at two or three knots like mechanical targets in a shooting gallery." The narrative has the tautness of the tow-line, easing with the scend of the story to tighten again as yet another strain is taken by the vessel or the crew. Salt with authenticity.

—R. C. S.

The White Road. L. P. Kirwan. *Hollis and Carter*, 30/-

At the North Pole under a thin skin of ice there is water 13,000 feet deep, while at the South Pole ice lies three miles thick over a mountainous valley in a once-fertile continent. These two fascinating fragments of information epitomize the discoveries of regiments of tough fighting men who have wrestled out the bitter trails that have been leading for centuries to the ends of the earth.

Mr. Kirwan, Director of the Royal Geographical Society, tells the whole story without a trace of national bias, only regretting that blundering civilized man was too slow to learn from the Eskimos who could have taught him so much. Here is both well-documented history and the glamour of resounding names, Pytheas the Greek steering for Ultima Thule in 320 B.C. coming into

the picture no less sharply than Commander Anderson navigating an atom-powered submarine under the northern ice in A.D. 1958, or indeed no less than Midshipman Horatio Nelson escaping with a polar bear twenty years before Trafalgar.

— C. C. P.

CREDIT BALANCE

The Campden Wonder. Edited by Sir George Clark. O.U.P., 18/-. Pamphlets, articles and new information about famous murder: victim reappeared, claiming to have been captive in Turkey, after triple execution for his murder. Exciting and learned, if oddly conceived, little compilation. Contributors include Andrew Lang, the First Viscount Maugham and a psychopathologist.

Groucho and Me. Groucho Marx. Gollancz, 21/-. The unflagging jocularity of this old-sock-to-safe-deposit autobiography is a bit wearing at times; but the best jokes and the narrative verve of the childhood chapters make it a near-must. The author comes from a family of Alsations and thinks his best films are *A Night at the Opera* and *A Day at the Races*.

English Literature in the Early Eighteenth Century. Bonamy Dobrée. Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 42/-. Vol. VII of the *Oxford History of English Literature*; Defoe, Swift and Pope get a thorough going over and everybody else a respectable mention.

AT THE PLAY

One Way Pendulum (ROYAL COURT)
The Merry Wives of Windsor (OLD VIC)

When In Rome (ADELPHI)

"AN evening of high drung and slarrit" is how its author, N. F. Simpson, describes *One Way Pendulum*, and that is just about what it is. When his two one-act plays came on at the Royal Court last year we hung him tidily on the *avant-garde* family tree near Ionesco and Adamov, but now it begins to look as if he may be planting something of his own. He has not yet found as satisfactory a formula as, say, Carroll did in *Alice*; a whole evening of surrealist inconsequence is bound to sate the greatest thirst for lunacy, but in spite of inevitable dead patches he has produced some brilliantly funny dialogue. And he is, intermittently, an acute and biting satirist; the prosecuting counsel's monstrous attempt to lay a damaging mountain of coincidence at poor Mr. Groomkirby's door would hardly seem out-of-the-ordinary in a *Times* law report.

It is the seeming normality of the Groomkirby household in William Gaskill's production that is so deliciously disturbing. The son, who is training five hundred speak-your-weight machines to sing an oratorio for the Albert Hall, and who has hit forty-three victims

with a crowbar because he must have a rational basis for the mourning he loves to wear; the awful blonde daughter, sunk in gloom about the length of her arms; Aunt Mildred, in her wheel-chair, who left St. Pancras twenty-five years ago and has never really arrived; Mrs. Groomkirby, an apparently conventional suburban housewife who complains that her family never gives her a hand with the meals, and so has to hire a char to come in and eat the left-overs; and of course Mr. Groomkirby, a solid citizen (even if he takes the oath on *Uncle Tom's Cabin*) whose passion for the law leads him to erect part of the Old Bailey in the sitting-room, where it suddenly springs into action, complete with judge and counsel.

Mr. Simpson's is an alarmingly sane madness. When the judge asks Mrs. Groomkirby if her husband has any negro blood she replies "Well, he has several bottles we don't know about up in his room." Considering the difficulties of sustaining this kind of thing he has been unusually successful; the joke wears thin, but it makes a stimulating evening. And every possible help is given by a cast whose deadpan loyalty is magnificent. Alison Leggett's Mrs. Groomkirby is a beautiful performance; and Douglas Wilmer's judge, George Benson's Mr. Groomkirby, Roddy Maude-Roxby's son, Patsy Rowlands' daughter, and Graham Crowden's prosecutor are all out of the top comic drawer.

The Old Vic, having recently excelled itself in Wilde and Congreve, has come a cropper over *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which should have been a far easier play. Not even the stuffiest purist would deny its producer a reasonable licence, for it is, after all, a farce, and as such always in need of inventive business; with the sole reservation that the business should be funny and in line with Shakespeare's intentions. John Hale, however, has made the fatal mistake of lacing his production with comic accents, as if he distrusted the play's ability to stand up by itself. He cuts at the very roots of Falstaff by allowing Joss Ackland to speak with an affected gentility that seems quite pointless; and Ford, down on the programme as a gentleman, is turned into a knowing cockney by Alec McCowen.

Mr. Ackland, who has done very well this season in other parts, is all wrong as Falstaff. True, he can bellow; but dissipation has scrawled no message on his lean and handsome face, and he is palpably a thin man padded out. In case anybody should miss this fact, Mr. Hale arranges for him to somersault into the laundry-basket, an athletic feat that should be utterly beyond any decently adipose knight. So where are we? In a great muddle, which is in no way solved by Moyra Fraser as Mistress Page indulging in a private burlesque of a dancing housewife. The set is agreeably architectural until it opens, to reveal a



[The Merry Wives of Windsor]

Sir John Falstaff—JOSS ACKLAND

sectional greenhouse under construction at the Ideal Home Exhibition. In this, if you please, Falstaff is expected to drink.

This production is an object-lesson in the risks of being too clever with Shakespeare. But at least some of the cast escape the infection. Rosalind Atkinson's *Mistress Quickly*, Maggie Smith's *Mistress Ford*, and Judi Dench's *Anne Page* are all excellent and without

REP SELECTION

Playhouse, Sheffield, *Hans, the Witch and the Goblin*, until January 23.

Playhouse, Salisbury, *Dick Whittington and his Cat*, until January 16.

Oldham Rep, *The Poltergeist*, until January 9.

Civic, Chesterfield, *Friends and Neighbours*, until January 9.

exaggeration, and Gerald James's Sir Hugh Evans and George Baker's Page are both good.

When *In Rome* is a sexy little musical adapted from the Italian and aimed pretty crudely at that mythical member of the audience, the tired businessman. It is so unrelievedly about sex that I felt sorry for its authors, who clearly lead very restricted lives, and must be sadly in need of other hobbies, such as woodwork and stamp-collecting. It starts in a very old-fashioned way with coy musical-comedy parents commenting on their children's marriage. This, as we can see, is blissful until the little wife admits to being the writer of an enormously successful erotic novel which is sweeping Rome. Her husband is horrified, and furious to find her famous over-night. He is, moreover, tortured by doubt as to the identity of the virile lorry-driver whom she has conjured up. But the public assuming that it is himself, thinly disguised, he becomes equally famous and, to his wife's anger, equally besieged by the opposite sex.

This neat comic idea is thinly spread. There are some fairly terrible jokes, and the lyrics are slick rather than witty. For extra measure a partially dressed lady delivers a long, and in my case soporific, lecture on exactly how to snare a man. The music is unremarkable. June Laverick and Dickie Henderson emerge moderately well. Miss Laverick's voice is not large, but she has charm and she can dance. Mr. Henderson is quick in the tricks of the music-hall, and puts them to advantage.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Rosmersholm (Comedy—25/11/59), Peggy Ashcroft superb in fine production. *A Clean Kill* (Criterion—23/12/59), new crime play of quality. *Make Me An Offer* (New—23/12/59), lively cockney musical.

—ERIC KEOWN



Slater—ROBERT RYAN

Ingram—HARRY BELAFONTE

AT THE PICTURES

Odds Against Tomorrow
Beloved Infidel

SUPERFICIALLY a tough crime thriller, *Odds Against Tomorrow* (Director: Robert Wise) has an unusual depth and range of character and incident. Its basis is the planning and carrying out of a bank robbery by three men, but the point is not the suspense and excitement of the climax; it is in the characters and motives of the men and the way they are influenced beforehand, the hints that build up their personalities and the background of their lives.

This is not to say that the picture isn't effective as a plain crime story. The pattern is classically simple: the briefing, the unwillingness of each man at last overcome by extreme need for money, the converging of the three on the fatal scene, powerful and well-managed suspense as they wait for the moment—and then, *bang*.

The simplest character is the oldest, Burke, a dismissed policeman (Ed Begley): he tells the others it's a "one-time job—one roll of the dice and we're through for ever." From a window opposite the bank, he shows Slater (Robert Ryan) how easy it would be to get in at one of the regular times when a waiter from a local café takes coffee to the guard: substitute an accomplice for the waiter... But the bogus waiter will have to be a Negro, and Slater, hating Negroes, refuses to take part. Sharp cut from his snarled word "nigger" to the third member of the trio, Ingram (Harry Belafonte); and at first he too refuses.

But further details of the two men's lives show us why they give in. Ingram is in debt to a gangster, who gets more

demanding and threatens the ex-wife and little daughter who mean everything to him; Slater, ashamed of not being able to support the woman he lives with, is maddened by a reminder that she needs more money and can get it. At last there they are, sullenly waiting for the moment. The crime goes wrong; and hatred between the white and the Negro leads to a (literal) fiery explosion, in which they are killed. When the bodies are found: "These are the two who started it all." "Which is which?" "Take your pick."

That, to be sure, is too pat an ending, but it doesn't detract from the merit of the rest of the picture. The detail is convincing and freshly observed, and the script (John O. Killens and Nelson Gidding from a novel by W. P. McGivern) is admirably done. Two examples: the first scene, introducing Slater as he walks through a park to meet Burke and is just that significantly much too affable to a Negro child he calls a "pickaninny"; and the scene that gives us in a half-minute or so the complete set-up between him and his girl (Shelley Winters, very good). It's a *film noir*, certainly, and by no means fragrant, but it is intelligently gripping and good.

Though you may have the impression that *Beloved Infidel* (Director: Henry King) is the story of the last years of F. Scott Fitzgerald, remember that it is based on the book by Sheila Graham, which thus makes it automatically a story about *her*. Gregory Peck, too, is far from suggesting Fitzgerald to anyone who knows anything about him. But we are not expected to feel particular sympathy and interest in Fitzgerald or hope that he will be cured of his alcoholism and inspired to write again; our basic

concern is meant to be with Sheila Graham, and how sad it was for her to be disappointed after working on him so devotedly.

But after all, the publicity plays fair, with the specification "the bitter-sweet story of the East End orphan girl who became the friend of the famous"; and as such, the picture comes over entertainingly enough, though it is very superficial and I didn't find it in any way emotionally moving. Like many popular autobiographical stories by women, it has a number of scenes the essential force of which is to make the spectator squirm as he—or rather she—feels for the central figure caught in some publicly embarrassing situation. I don't think this is a true aesthetic emotion any more than horror or disgust, but it is obviously just as popular, with a different audience. Deborah Kerr does all that could be done with the part, there is amusing detail of life in Hollywood, and the colour photography (Leon Shamroy) is often very pleasing.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

There are fascinating pictures of the animals of the Arctic in the new Disney nature film *White Wilderness*, though one does sometimes feel that they have been rather too cunningly edited so as to make the animals charming comedians. Also in London: *On the Beach* (30/12/59) which should leave any person of imagination less, not more, worried about the future and is a cracking good film anyway; *Anatomy of a Murder* (14/10/59), diversely enjoyable; *Char-mants Garçons* and *Persons Unknown* (both 2/12/59), pleasing pair of comedies, French and Italian; *Desert Mice* ("Survey," 23/12/59), pleasing British comedy;

Les Amants (11/11/59), brilliant in spots; and that one you've probably heard about. *Ben-Hur* (30/12/59).

Of the releases, the one I enjoyed most was *But Not for Me* (16/12/59): trivial, empty, but amusing and well done. *They Came to Cordura* (11/11/59) is a group-journey-against-odds story, visually splendid, with many good points.

— RICHARD MALLETT

ON THE AIR

Religion by Radio

WHEN the Duke of York was married, in 1923, it was suggested that the ceremony might be broadcast, but the Dean of Westminster forbade any such notion, saying that if he allowed it the service might be listened to by anyone anywhere, "by persons in a Public House, with their hats on." One cannot imagine a current dignitary putting it quite like that (except perhaps in the modest hope of scoring another hit in "Sayings of the Week") but it is curious how the feeling still persists, how one switches on the wireless at random and at the first dog-collar-rounded phrase or salvo from the organ one switches off again. It is not ill-will, only a feeling that the church is the place for that sort of thing. One is seldom in the mood for being got at across one's own fireplace. I think it is possible that if "Lift Up Your Hearts" lasted ten minutes instead of five it would lose a third of its three million audience; as it is few people are sufficiently firm in their apathy to switch off and risk missing the weather forecast.

Apathy isn't the only barrier the religious department of the BBC have to face. The faithful, just as in a parish, are

a perpetual trial. The kernel of the problem is whether the listeners should be given what they want or what's good for them. (The same problem afflicts anybody who chooses mass communication to worry about, but not always so intensely. "Good" has a slightly different meaning for one thing.) The answer of course is a compromise, which is why some of the religious programmes which seem to have been going on for thirty years are likely to go on for thirty more. What the listeners want is what they have always had, nothing new, nothing that would startle them, nothing that might make them think. "Sunday Half Hour," that layer cake of homily and hymns, is a fair example.

The religious broadcasting department, naturally enough, feel that this side of their activities is necessary, but that it is more important to use their enormous reach, the long arm of the radio, to encourage the fringe Christians into believing that their religion is still alive, and that it matters. This means keeping their activities up-to-date and keeping themselves out of a rut; producing something new, something that will startle, something that will make people think. "The Way of Life" (which was substituted amid many complaints for what used to be the fourth Sunday church service) is the latest major step in this direction. It is a sort of Christian "Panorama" on sound only, and is, in the nature of things, a bit patchy, but seems to me very much on the right lines. Presumably the time will come when "The Way of Life" will seem to have been going on for at least thirty years and its regular, contented listeners will be agonized at the idea of having something new and uncorny substituted for it.

Luckily the department which guards, or struggles with, this compromise is its own master. It uses its own judgment. For example, though broadcasting time is divided roughly according to the membership of the Christian Churches in England—rather more than half C. of E., a third Free Church, a tenth R.C., and the rest minorities—it is not governed entirely by statistics in its choice of minorities; the Quakers, with their enormous contribution to the historical development of Christianity in England, are in, but several larger and more vocal communities are out. Nor is the department much bothered with questions of "good taste" in the sense which prompts listeners to ring up the BBC.

Its greatest asset is the extraordinary strength of the traditional English sermon. Gone are the days when eight thousand people would stand shoulder to shoulder in St. Paul's Churchyard for three hours listening to Donne. But one has only to listen to a half-hour of one of his modern counterparts—The Rev. H. A. Williams on Hell was the last I heard—to rediscover the urge that made such endurance possible.

— PETER DICKINSON

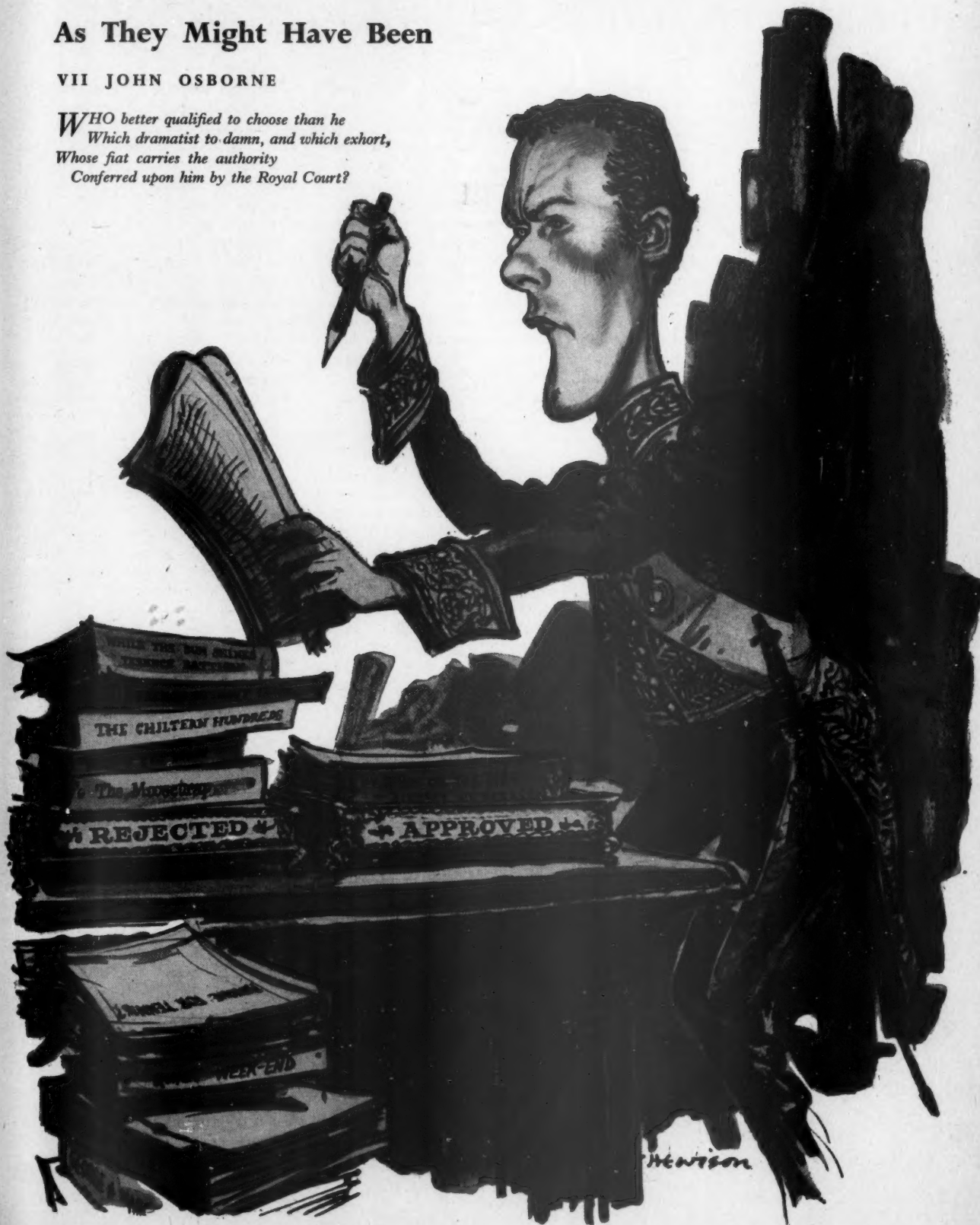


Eric Burges

As They Might Have Been

VII JOHN OSBORNE

*WHO better qualified to choose than he
Which dramatist to damn, and which exhort,
Whose fiat carries the authority
Conferred upon him by the Royal Court?*



Play! Olé!

By J. E. HINDER

Sir Grantley Adams, Prime Minister of the West Indies Federation, said there would be fewer revolutions in Latin-American countries if South Americans were taught to play cricket.—Sunday Express

"YES, señor, we played el cricket here in Paramorela," said the old man. "It was a great thing, they were fine times!" His eyes, piercing and coal-black, probed the middle distance as if expecting a long throw-in from some phantom outfielder. He was tall and still muscular, his faded white flannels patched and stained, his thick llama-wool shirt open at the neck, round which, loosely knotted and greasy, hung a silk tie which might once have been red and yellow.

"They were fine times," he said again. "Do you know, señor, what they called me in the tabernas, even as far as San Jimenez de la Fuente?" I shook my head. He drew himself up proudly. "They called me 'Fearless Freddie' García Montalban y Lopez," he said. "I was the fastest bowler in South America. Faster than el gran Larwood, as fast as the strike of the Paramorelan mud-hawk!"

"You don't play here any more?" I asked. "We do not play here any more, señor," he replied, drawing deeply at

a pipe of asphyxiating Azteblanes tobacco. "The last game played here was against our deadly rivals, San Bernardino de la Sagrada Botella Gipsies," he said at length. "They were the strongest side in the world. *Muy, muy fuerte*. Their opening batsman was Don Carlos de Esteban y Muerte, scorer of seventy centuries and Dictator of Escudaria." He spat ferociously.

"There was not a place vacant in the plaza," he went on, "not in the *sol*, not in the *sombra*—all the youth and beauty of Paramorela was there that day. Ah, the ladies, my Carmencita among them in her black mantilla! *Muy hermosa, muy, muy hermosa!*" He sighed.

"When I went on from the Monastery end with the dust-storm behind me, I sent down a bumper that whistled through Don Carlos' black beard. He scowled at me and at the cañon end his retinue stirred ominously. But I had hot blood in my veins then, señor. The next ball, faster than the pounce of the Paramorelan cactus-adder, struck him between the eyes. He fell to the ground. The next moment a bullet whistled past my head and the umpire fell dead! I drew my knife and grappled with the batsman at my end while the plaza filled with combatants. In ten minutes

the pavilion was in flames and artillery had begun to open up from the surrounding hills.

"By nightfall," he continued, "the cathedral and seventeen churches were in ruins. With my own hands I rescued from the cathedral our club's most sacred relic, one of the Great Doctor's batting-pads, carried to our country many years before by a wandering Free Forester. Señor, the war lasted two years and it was a disaster for Paramorelan cricket from which, alas, it has never recovered. Since then, successive Dictators have proscribed our grand old game."

His old eyes clouded momentarily.

"Now, the youth of to-day does not know a googly from an outswinger," he murmured sadly. "All they think of is Revolution."

It was growing late, and I bade him farewell. Looking back through the growing dusk, it seemed that I saw him go mournfully through the motions of one bowling a fast Paramorelan inswinger on the leg-stump.

☆

Right in Character

"On the drive to the capital Mr. Khrushchev, looking everywhere, beaming and smiling, waving and nodding, remained beheaded . . ."—*East Anglian Daily Times*



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